



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

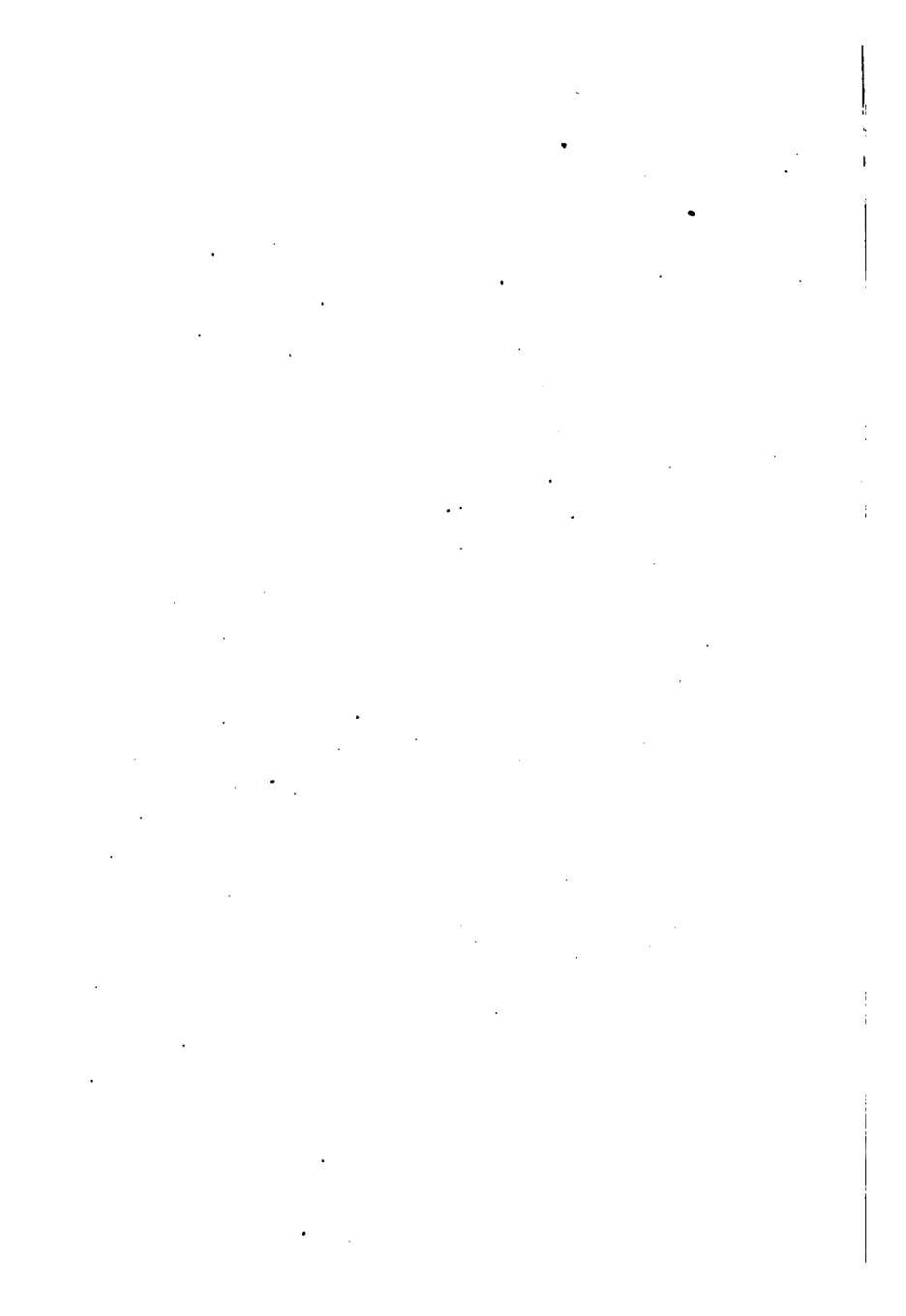
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

BIBLE ECHOES



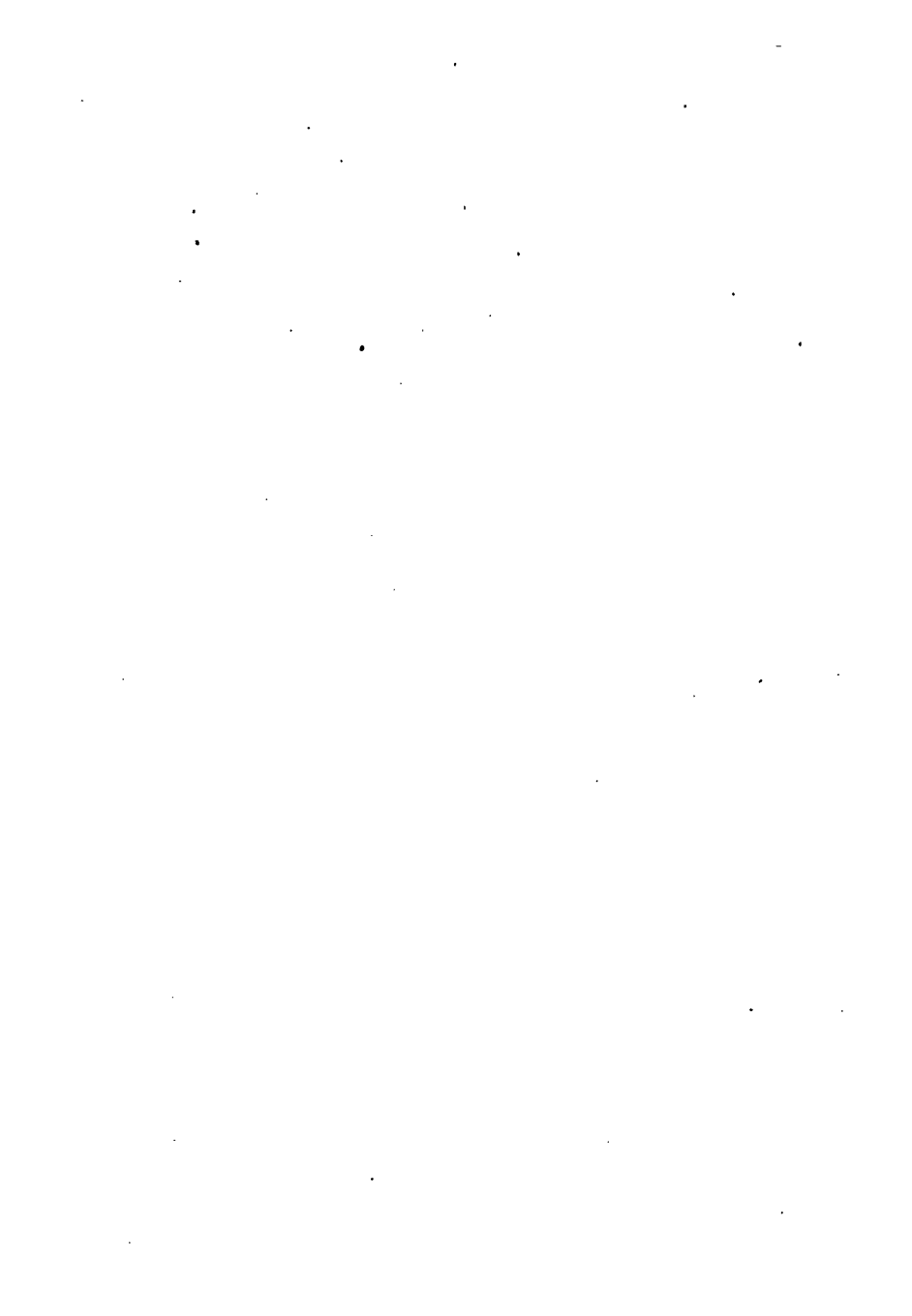
BY THE
REV. JAMES WELLS





BIBLE ECHOES.







THE CHESS-PLAYERS.

BIBLE ECHOES:

ADDRESSES TO THE YOUNG.

BY THE

REV. JAMES WELLS, M.A.,

GLASGOW.

— 0 —

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCLXXVII.

141. m. 652.

EDINBURGH : PRINTED BY JOHN GREIG & SON.

PREFACE.

HE following addresses were delivered at a monthly Sabbath afternoon service for children. The special aim was to interest the young, and also to be helpful to their parents and teachers who attended the service. The subjects have been arranged so as to present the chief facts of our faith in something like the order of history and the proportions of Scripture.

The title of "Bible Echoes" has been chosen because the simplest explanation of Bible teaching was attempted in each address. The writer hopes that these "Echoes" are faithful, however faint; that they will be repeated and multiplied by some responding hearts; and that, like other echoes, they will win the listener's ear to the voice that waked them—the voice which still speaks from heaven to old and young.

J. W.

POLLOKSHIELDS, *October 1877.*

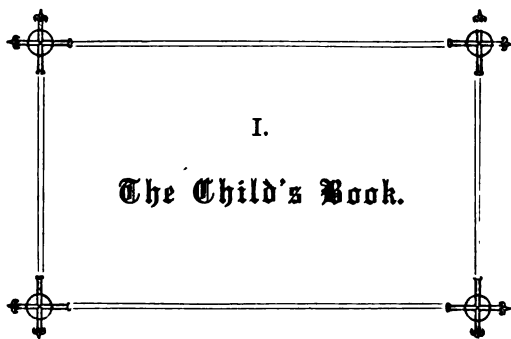


Contents.

	PAGE
I. THE CHILD'S BOOK	I
II. OUR LOST HOME	17
III. TRESPASSING	31
IV. HURT	45
V. CHEATED	59
VI. FOUND OUT	77
VII. THE CHILD'S FRIEND	93
VIII. OUR HELPER	107
IX. THE LIGHT OF MEN	121
X. OUR SIN-BEARER	135
XI. OUR EXAMPLE	151
XII. THE WATER OF LIFE	167
XIII. THE GIFT OF GOD	183
XIV. THE MESSAGE OF MERCY	199
XV. THE HOLY GHOST	215
XVI. THE CHILD'S PRAYER	229
XVII. THE CHILD'S PSALM	245
XVIII. MISSIONS	261
XIX. HOME	277
XX. ALPHA AND OMEGA	293

List of Illustrations.

	PAGE
CHEATED AT CHESS	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE TOMB AND SHADE OF WASHINGTON	<i>To face</i> 13
A GATHERED LAMB	,, 102
SPRING IN GREENLAND	,, 127
WATCHING FOR SUNRISE	,, 162
THE PRAIRIE ON FIRE	,, 225
THE MOTTO OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS	,, 296



I.

The Child's Book.





MY DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,—I wish to speak to you about something which you all have, but which yet some of you have not. Many people are in this strange case. When Alexander the Great was plundering the palace of Darius, one of his soldiers found in a leather bag the crown-jewels of Persia. The prize was worth millions; but the stupid fellow opened the bag, shook out the little glittering stones among the rubbish, and went away boasting about the fine sack he had got for carrying his food. A slave was one day climbing a mountain when his foot slipped, and he fell. To break the fall he caught a sapling, but it gave way, and slave and sapling went rolling together down the steep hillside to the bottom. When he got up he noticed curious little white particles sticking to the roots. They looked very like silver. He hastened back to the spot where the tree had grown, got down on his knees, and with his hands dug away a

few inches of the soil. Lo! he had discovered the mines of Potosi, which have yielded hundreds of shiploads of solid silver. The owners of "the Silver Mountain," as it is called, for it is now honey-combed with more than five thousand silver mines, were up to that day poor men. For only the surface was really theirs, as they knew nothing of the riches beneath. You sing,—

"Holy Bible, book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine."

Very good; but is it yours only as the jewels belonged to the soldier, or as the silver mines belonged to the owners before the slave made his happy discovery? I want you to search the Scriptures with me, that you may find and possess the goodly pearls they contain; for, as we are told, "the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hid in a field": it is hid from the thoughtless, and hid for the thoughtful. God grant that the bread of life I break here may be like the bread which Christ blest and gave to the multitude. I pray that it may feed the men, and the women, and the children.

The address to-day is about a boy who became a wise and good man, because, when a child, he made the Bible his book. Turn up your New Testament, and read about him in 2 Timothy iii. 15: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in

Christ Jesus." Timothy was the chosen companion and bosom-friend of Paul ; a most unselfish and noble-hearted young man, whom the apostle loved probably more than he ever loved anybody else. Born at Derbe or Lystra in Asia Minor, he was well brought-up by his mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois, who prayed that their boy might love and serve the God of his fathers. A sweet and gentle boy, he yielded to the influence of mother and grandmother ; rude, bad boys never do that. He loved his Bible, although he had not yet got "the new heart." His case teaches us that you may know the Bible well, and still be without true faith. One day there was a great stir in the town ; two Jews from Jerusalem, called Paul and Barnabas, were preaching a new religion, and working wonders. The poor heathens, fancying that their gods had come down to them in the likeness of men, even went the length of bringing oxen and garlands, that they might pay divine honours to the preachers. But ere long the fickle mob stoned them within an inch of death. As particles of steel are drawn by the magnet, all the boys in the town, and our boy among the rest, would be drawn to the crowd. He heard the burning words, and beheld the Christian courage of the preachers ; and was converted. About seven years afterwards he was ordained a preacher. Two of Paul's letters (or epistles) to him have been preserved, and my text is a sentence from one of them. It gives us the secret of all Timothy's goodness ; and may the Holy Spirit help you

to find that secret, that you too may be wise-hearted like him.

The apostle tells us here that a child may know the Bible, that a child may be made wise unto salvation, and that salvation comes to us by faith in Christ Jesus. You will easily remember the three parts of the address when I put them before you in this way :—

I. The Book of Books—the Holy Scriptures.

II. The Blessing of Blessings—Salvation.

III. The Benefactor of Benefactors—Christ Jesus.

I. The Book of Books.—"The Bible" just means the Book. No other book is like it, as no star is like the sun. And the Bible is a child's book. A child may know it. The child Timothy did. I do not think that in this he was a wonderful child, but just like other children. The text says that he knew it from a little child. His Bible was not so big as yours, he had only the Old Testament; nor was it bound like yours—hard and square. It was written on sheepskin dried or parched in the sun, and so called *parchment*; and it was called a volume, that is, something rolled up, as a web is rolled up around a rod by the draper. This suited very well, for each book was printed by itself, and the Hebrew Bible begins, not at what you would

call the first page, but at what you would call the last, and has to be read backwards, line by line, and leaf by leaf. I should think that the Bible was the whole library in Timothy's house. Indeed the Bible is a library rather than a book ; for, though it has but one glorious subject, it is made up of sixty-six books, written by more than thirty different people. How sweet and short were the hours when the child sat on his grandmother's knee—his mother busy about the house—listening to the famous old stories about Adam and Eve, Noah, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, Esther. He is not restless, but quiet through eager interest ; his eye brightens up with feeling ; he asks questions ; he is pleased to repeat what he has learnt. As he grows older he gets leave to read himself the precious, well-thumbed volumes. His mind begins to wake up, and he loves the Bible all the more because he owes to it the first pleasures of thinking. Happy are the men and women who fondly look back to the quiet Sabbath hours of childhood when, on a mother's knee, they first heard the old story. The spirit of the story, which filled the mother's heart, seemed also to fill the whole house as with the smell of sweet spices. Home was then a little heaven ; and all this came through God's own Book. Even when a child Timothy knew the Scriptures—not that he knew thoroughly all that is in them. I daresay he does not know all that yet, but is still learning more in heaven.

Your Bible is bigger and simpler than Timothy's ;

for he had only the Old Testament. But the New Testament explains the Old, and is full of the blessed name of Jesus. Then you have so many maps, and pictures, and beautiful books to illustrate it. Where in the world can you find such charming stories as in the Bible? "Oh do tell me the name of the book with these stories, and I will get my mother to buy it for us," said a boy to a friend who was telling some stories to a group of children. "Oh," she said, "it's the Bible." His face fell, for he thought the Bible was a dull, dry, old book for old people. A poor ragged boy I knew, who is now a very useful man, told me that when he first went to the Sabbath school, the things in the Bible filled him with delight, and that he used to dream about them when lying a-bed in his garret. "Tell me the finest writing you ever read," one learned man once said to another, who replied, "The finest writing I ever read is the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel." "Well, I am ashamed to say I have never read it," was the answer. "Read it then," said his friend, "and I think you will agree with me." He read it; felt its heavenly beauty and power; read it again and again, and became a new man. Believe that the Bible is not only a book for preachers and professors, or for old and dying folks who sadly need comfort; but that it is for you. Be like Timothy, a Bible-reading, Bible-loving child; and you will find its words sweeter than honey, more precious also than gold. Thank God that from a child you can know the Holy Scriptures, which have done

more good to the world, one thousand times over, than all the other books ever written ; for they tell us about—

II. The Blessing of Blessings : They “are able to make thee wise unto salvation.”—It is because the Bible brings the blessing of blessings, that it is the book of books, just as your body is precious because an immortal soul lodges in it. The brave Arctic explorers, who have recently returned, failed to reach their mark, the North Pole. Their turning-point was some 400 miles south of it. They went “*towards*” but not “*unto*” it. But the Bible is able to make thee wise unto salvation ; it not only shews you the right way, and takes you so far, but it leads you on “*unto*” the glorious end—salvation. Notice this however : if the Bible is to do you any good, everything depends on the way you use it. The Scribes and Pharisees knew the Bible so well, that had every Bible in the world been burnt, they could have written it without a mistake from memory ; and yet it did them no good. Robert Moffat, the missionary, tells that an African chief once came to him lamenting that his best hunting dog had eaten his New Testament. “Oh ! I'll give you another,” said Mr Moffat. “Ah !” said the hunter, “my fear is not that the dog has spoiled the book, but that the book has spoiled my best dog. The words he has eaten are so full of love and gentleness, that they will keep him from fighting or hunting for me any more.” But he

soon found that the good words had not made his dog better or worse. And many who know well the blessed words of the Bible, seem to get no more good from them than that hunting dog got. The Bible is God's great medicine-book ; but what good can it do you unless your soul rightly receive not its words merely, but the very things these words signify—God's remedies for our diseases. Mungo Park, the African traveller, says that the African doctors write the names of their remedies on a black board with chalk, add some spells, wash off the chalk into a bowl, and make the sick man drink the dirty water, which they think will cure him. Sometimes the doctors write the names of medicines on dried leaves, which they put into hot water, as we do with tea leaves ; the sick man drinks the infusion, and expects a cure. You smile at their folly ; but are they not just as foolish who fancy that a mere head-knowledge of the Bible will heal their souls ? The Bible in the hand won't do ; the Bible in the head won't do ; it must be in the heart, made a living thing by God's good Spirit. You must be able to say with David, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." You must put the best thing (God's word) in the best place (your heart) for the best purpose, to keep from sin.

I once met an American minister who was fresh from a visit to a remarkable church among the backwoodsmen of Canada. This was its history : A wild young Scotsman left his native land that he might see the world.

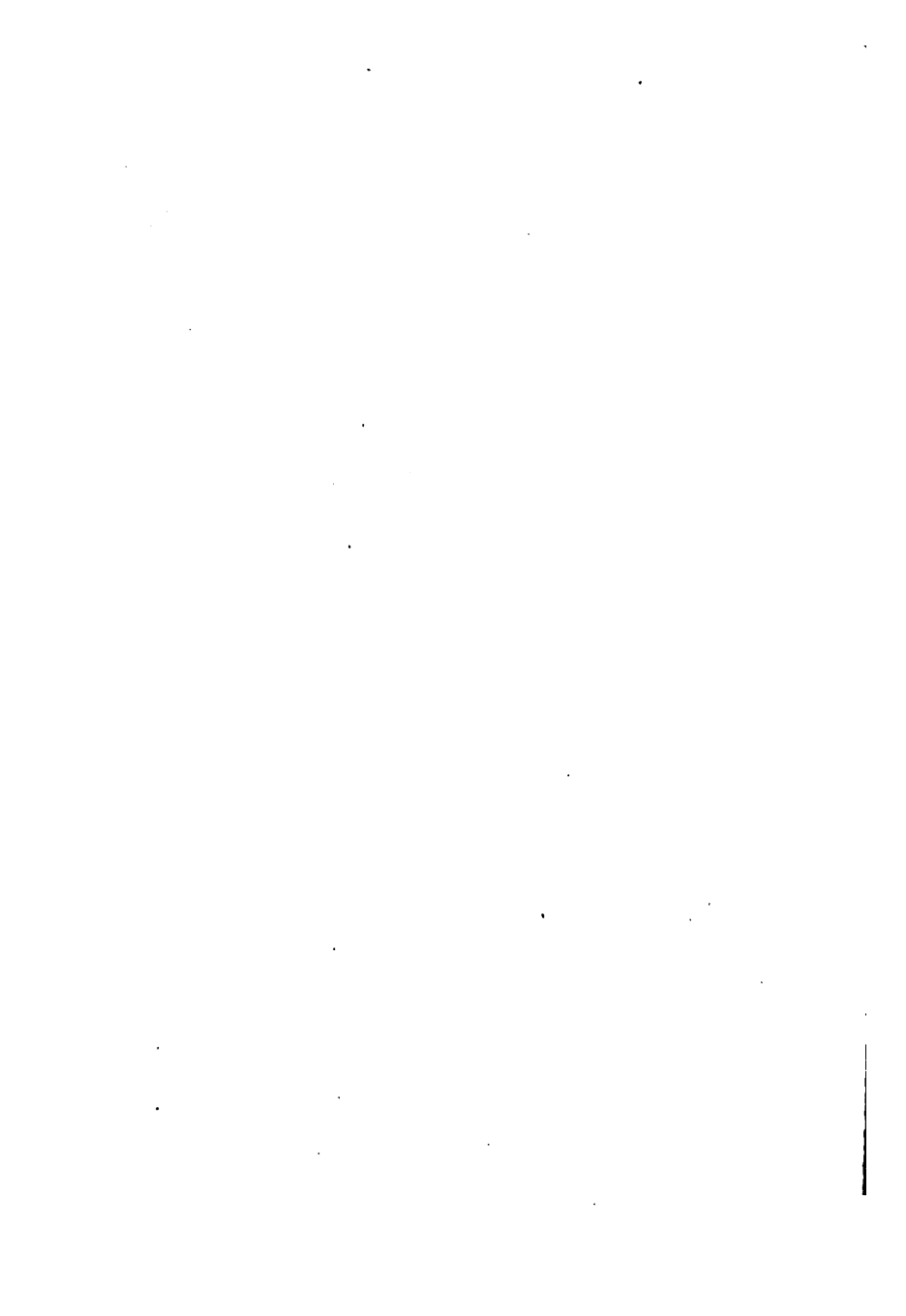
His mother, moved by pious concern for his soul, had taken care before he left to put a little Bible into his trunk ; and had offered many a prayer for her prodigal son. After much roving, he settled in the far west of Canada. His neglected Bible had till then been as powerless a thing as a log of wood. But by-and-by strange thoughts came stealing over his soul as he was musing in his lonely cabin. He opened his Bible, and God opened his heart to understand it. That book was soon more powerful with him than all other things put together. He started a Sabbath school, and gathered his neighbours for prayer and reading the Bible. It soon appeared that the Holy Scriptures thus used were able to make men wise unto salvation, and a new church was formed. The minister who told me this story said that he had never seen a more delightful work of grace. Take another illustration. Some years ago an English vessel was sailing up the Hooghly to Calcutta with a pilot on board. The ship almost ran ashore at an ugly bend in the river. The captain stormed and swore. The pilot, who was a Christian man, said not a word, but shewed by his marked silence and manner that he was wounded. The captain felt rebuked. His ship was soon at sea again, homeward bound. He then remembered the pilot, and conscience smote him. He had no Bible of his own, but, after some searching, he got the loan of one from a sailor. That Bible made him wise unto salvation. Then cursing ceased on board, and in its stead arose the sound of praise, as the

captain led his astonished sailors in family worship. On his next voyage to Calcutta the same pilot stepped on board. The captain greeted him warmly, and told him of the change. Such is the power of God's word by sea and land, and in all ages.

The Bible has this saving power only when, through the Spirit, you take it as God's message to yourself. "It is able to make *thee* wise." For it is as personal a message to your own self as any the postman ever brought to your door. The Bible singles you out just as if God had nobody else to think about; just as if He and you were the only two in the world; and it says, "I have a message from God to thee." And what is the message about? It points out to you—

III. The Benefactor of Benefactors.—It brings you the glad tidings of "salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The other week our city kept holiday, and thousands witnessed the unveiling of the poet's statue. That crowd, in which all were pressing towards the one centre, may represent the church of God. As I passed that way a few days before, I saw the figure covered all over with a canvass veil. And so the church of the Old Testament looked to a veiled Christ. They knew that He was there, and they trusted in Him; but His divine image was half revealed and half concealed by dim types and prophecies. When the hour came on that





THE TOMB AND SHADE OF WASHINGTON.

BIBLE SKETCHES,

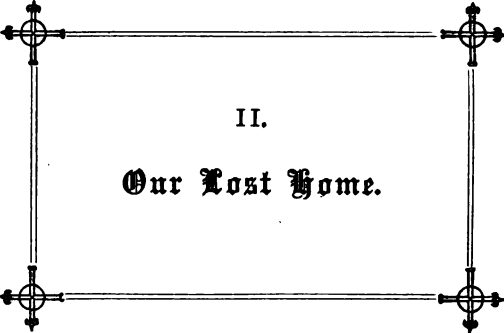
holiday, a cord was drawn, and the veil fell off, and the statue stood forth in perfect outline before an admiring multitude. And so, when the fulness of the time was come, Christ appeared in the flesh, and was revealed—that is, unveiled to men. Christ is in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments, and this is why they have so much power over men. Yet many read the Bible often, and never see Him. They are like children I have seen puzzled with the picture on the previous page, “The Tomb and Shade of Washington.” For long they tried in vain to see him; though in soldier’s dress, with his sword by his side, he is planted almost in the very centre. A word or two solved the riddle. “Don’t you see him standing in white between the two trees?”; and then they were amused or vexed with their stupidity, and could not look at the picture without seeing the image of the great general. So Christ, the Spotless One, is the grand centre figure in the Bible. But He needs to be pointed out as if by the finger of God, and we need spiritual eyes to see Him. Thus Paul says, “It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.” Everywhere the Bible tells us that the only way of salvation is by faith or trust in Christ Jesus. It is said that His name is found about 500 times in the Epistles of Paul. Yet some who read the Bible are only terrified by it. They stop at Mount Sinai, and never reach Mount Calvary. Their ears are so stunned with the thunders of the law, that they hear not the gentle voice of Jesus saying, “Come unto me.” And

so they think, as many people do, and as you may easily do, that the Bible is a sad and gloomy book, because it has so much to say about sin, death, and judgment. No doubt these are awfully sad and gloomy things ; but then the Bible is not to blame for them, any more than the doctor is to blame for the fever he comes to cure. They were, alas ! in the world long before the Bible ; and if the Bible were taken away, they would remain in the world still, and become ten times more fearful than they now are. The Bible offers us salvation from all these frightful things through faith in the Saviour. The reading of the Bible at first, you remember, made Luther very sad. How could it be otherwise ; for he believed in Moses, but not in Christ. But soon he began to trust in Christ. Then he arose ; peace and joy filled his heart ; and with nothing but the Bible in his hand, he shook Europe from Austria to England, and from Rome to Stockholm. " Let this book," he cried, " be in all tongues, in all hands, under all eyes, in all ears and hearts." His motto lies in my text : " Nothing but the Bible ; none but Christ." When he came to the verse, " In the volume of the Book it is written of me," he said, " What *book* ? what *me* ? There is only one *book* and one *me* in the universe—The Bible and Christ." Oh, believe the Book, and trust the Saviour ! You have all the reasons in the world for trusting Him. May God's spirit bring your heart to the heart of the Bible—Christ Jesus, the Saviour. The Holy Bible will then do for you

all it did for the boy and the man Timothy. Yours will be a beautiful and blessed life. The good will thank God for the help you give them, and God Himself will give you a crown of glory that fadeth not away.







II.

Our Lost Home.





FEW spots on earth can be more interesting to men than the homes of their forefathers.

Every year thousands cross the seas to visit them. Some people almost worship their ancestral homes. Then multitudes travel far to see the birth-place of some famous man, and gladly pay money for a relic of it; and those who cannot visit such places, prize pictures and descriptions of them. I wish you to visit with me the most ancient and wonderful birth-place and family-seat in the world. You know its name—Eden. We cannot call it the birth-place of our first parents; for they had no birth-place, as they were never born, but came fresh from God's creating hand. But it is the birth-place of all mankind. Will you take a half-hour's walk with me in the garden of Eden? We shall examine the fruits and flowers in that fair garden, and the terrible blight that withered them all.

The third chapter of Genesis describes the most beautiful place, the most perfect pair, and the saddest

home-leaving in the world. The woful story has three parts—

I. Before the Fall.

II. The Fall itself.

III. After the Fall.

I. Before the Fall.—To the child's question, "Who made you?" the child answers, "God." "I will praise Thee," says David; "for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Man was made by God, made like God, and made for God. A gentleman once sowed flower-seeds in his garden, so that when they sprung up, they formed the name of his son in large letters. The little boy found them out himself; was overjoyed that his own name, William Beattie, was flourishing on the flower-bed, and fetched his father to see the wonder. "Oh, don't you think, Willie, that the wind carried the seeds there! Might they not grow up in that way by chance, or of themselves?" Willie declared that that could not be; somebody must have sowed them on purpose. His father then shewed Willie that his own body and the world must have been planned by some one; and so led his thoughts up to the great Creator. Yes, when all other things had been made, "God said, let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." God waited till He had fitly framed and furnished the world for its tenant and lord; and then made man as His master-piece, and rested,

having put all things at man's service. And notice, that man was made like God, not in His body, for God has no body, but in his soul. God was the Father of Adam's spirit, and so Adam was at first God-like, "a little god." Admire Adam as he came without a flaw from the hand of God. His cup of happiness was full to the brim. He was holy, for without holiness there could be no happiness for him or his children. He had peace with God, and peace with himself. He had Eve as his companion ; for she was made for him, as both were made for God. Then everything around added to the happiness within. Eden was a charming district in which there was a glorious garden called Paradise, which means a royal park or pleasure-ground, a palace of all delights. Its four rivers rolled over golden sands, amid bending fruit-trees, and sweet-smelling flowers. Plenty of work added to their happiness, for they had to keep and dress the garden. A paradise without work would be a paradise of fools. The trail of a serpent, called ennui or weariness, would spoil all its fruits and flowers. Even Adam and Eve before the fall found no enjoyment without employment. And, to crown all, they lived in the sunshine of their heavenly Father's smile. Thus man's first home was all heaven.

Though we have been turned out of Eden into the wilderness, we should remember what we once were. Though fallen, you are only fallen, thank God. Though fallen so far, you have not fallen beyond the reach of God's grace. You have not fallen like the angels for

whom there is no raising up. Your fallen nature was not your first nature ; it is not your true nature ; and it need not be your last. Though sin is deep in your soul now, there was no sin in man to begin with, and the Second Adam can undo the mischief the first Adam has done. He saves His people from their sins, blessed be His holy name. Your soul is like a costly but broken vessel, on which you can still trace the owner's name, and some marks of grandeur. The divine image in the soul has been burnt, but not burnt out. You were made for nothing less than God ; and therefore he only is a real man who is godly ; for when man was at his very best, he was like God. And God's mark is on you still ; so that, if you grow godless, that mark will prove you to be an unnatural monster. A little English girl, who had a large fortune, was once stolen by Indian gipsies ; and it was several years before she was restored to her parents. What would you have said if that girl had forgotten her father and mother, and become quite delighted to live among these robbers ? But she could never forget that she was born for a far better position than she then had. She always hoped and prayed that she might soon be restored to her true home, and her heritage. And so you in this wilderness should never forget your first home, and your heavenly birth-right ; and you should be most thankful that the Good Shepherd has come to bring you back to God, and make you heirs of heaven.

But we must hurry over the brief history of Adam

unfallen. Alas ! it was very brief, for he soon marred what God had made so very good. This he did by—

II. The Fall.—This is the deepest and darkest subject in the world. Many a child, hearing the story of Adam and Eve, has said something like this : “ But, mother, why did God not keep the serpent out of the garden ? Isn’t God stronger than any one, and couldn’t He have kept the serpent out if He had liked ? ” A little child can ask that question, but the wisest man cannot fully answer it. Yet some things help us to an answer. Were a father to shut up his boy in a room for life, and not allow him to see any play-fellows, that boy would be kept from many sins into which other boys fall ; but then he could never be a man. By-and-by he would not do anything wrong, because he should become unable to do anything at all. If he is ever to be a man, he must have scope and liberty with all its risks. Thus God left the angels and Adam free. Again, it may seem hard that so small a sin should bring so great a curse. But was it a small sin ? The sin of the hand was small—stealing an apple ; but the sin of the heart was great ; for they rebelled against God, broke His law, and scorned Him. The stealing of a shilling makes a man a thief quite as much as the stealing of one thousand pounds. Our sins might be small, if there were a small God to sin against. While some sins are greater than others, every sin is great, because it dishonours the King eternal, immortal, and invisible ; and often sins that

seem small to men, are great in the eye of God. Once more, you may think that they were more sinned against than sinning, as they were beguiled into sin by the cunning tempter. Eve laid the blame upon the serpent, and Adam laid the blame upon Eve and God. "The woman whom *Thou* gavest to be with me," he said shamefully, "she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." It makes one smile to think how children every day try to excuse themselves for wrong-doing by blaming others, just as their first parents did. Still, though tempted to it, it was their own act; and they were punished for it. If an older and cleverer boy tempts you into sin, you know perfectly that you are guilty of that sin. The temptation of the serpent was not Adam's sin, but his yielding to it was.

Now, what was the sin of Adam and Eve? It was just this—that they did not believe and obey God's plain word; they grew proud and discontented; they longed for what God had forbidden; they gratified their appetites when they should not. When you get to the bottom and beginning of every sin, you find that it is the very same as the first sin.

Ah! you are tempted every day by the same cruel Tempter. Take care, then, for his cunning overcame the angels in heaven, and Adam and Eve in Paradise. Evil is his good, and our ruin his delight. Your soul is his coveted prize. A man was once carrying a splendid diamond to the king, when he was seized by robbers who knew the secret. He offered them his purse, his rings,

his horse, his clothes, but they would not be put off with these things. "No, we must have the diamond," they cried. So the Devil—that great Robber—is determined to have your soul. Oh, guard it, for it is the most precious thing you have! If it is saved, all is saved; if it be lost, all is lost. One of the great sights at the Exhibition in London in 1851, was the Kohinoor diamond. It was kept inside a glass case, in a small tent; and an armed soldier guarded it. It was preserved so carefully, because it was worth two millions of money. But your soul—who can give a name to its value? It is worth more than all the gold in the world. By faith and prayer commit it unto God's safe keeping; and then it will be "hid with Christ in God," like a jewel in a double case, which no thief can break open. None shall be able to pluck it out of the Father's hands.

We shall now see what took place—

III. After the Fall.—The effects of the Fall are told in one word—*Ruin*. What pen, what tongue, can describe their misery and shame! Before the Fall, Adam and Eve walked with God, as a man walks with his bosom-friend, in holy, happy fellowship; but as soon as they had fallen, they became full of guilt, guile, and fear. Before God had spoken a word, they felt condemned; and were fain to hide from Him in the darkest lurking-place within reach. As Luther says, conscience pictured the wrath of God like a giant standing over them with a club ready to smite them.

And the same fear of God is in all Adam's children, till grace take it away. God drove out the man, and placed at the east of the garden cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep or guard the way of the tree of life. That flaming sword, what was it? I once saw a great fire that reddened the whole sky. At length all the flames united in one, and that one flame seemed to reach to heaven. As it leaped and darted right and left, it made me think of a gigantic sword brandished by an unseen hand. The brave firemen dared not go near it, for it turned every way as if to guard all the approaches to the building. And so between our parents and Paradise there was a leaping flame which, as a sign of God's anger, must have been very fearful to the poor outcasts. As they looked to what was so lately their happy home, they saw—

“The gate

With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms.”

But the curse did not stop there ; it has lighted upon all their children. The world and the Bible shew us that sin brings sorrow. You are a proof of it yourself—everybody is ; for you never had a sorrow which did not in some way spring from sin. All earth's sicknesses and sufferings and deaths, all come from sin, and from the first sin of Adam. Thus misery and man are twins even from the birth. If you find a man who was born before the Fall, you may then find a man who has nothing to do with sin.

And the curse of the Fall has reached the beasts, and the very soil of the earth, as rivers, swollen by floods, overflow their banks, and soak the neighbouring plains. Hence nearly everything is wrong, and out of joint. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." This sorrowful world is full of pitiful sounds. As poets say, the ocean moans, the woods sigh, the winds wail, and the lakes sob. Earth also has been wounded, and its sad voices seem to join the grief of man. The earth, at first so clean and fair, became horrid with thorns and thistles, every one of which was a fruit of the Fall. Then man has to eat his bread in the sweat of his face ; as if the earth, once so generous, were unwilling to yield her fruits to man, now that he is the foe of God. When the cattle-plague came to our country, it not only smote the cattle, so that they died, but the spreading infection poisoned the very wood and stones, and in some cases the byres were levelled with the ground, and burnt with fire. And thus the leprosy of sin smote even the ground and its fruits with a curse. After that, will you not bear sin an eternal grudge ? Will you not believe that sin, any sin, every sin, is the vilest thing in the universe, and that it is eternally to be hated, and eternally to be shunned ? Will you not love the grace that saves the soul from sin ?

When Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise—oh, what a home-leaving ! what a shock to the guilty pair !—they were not left without hope, for they carried

with them the signs and the sounds of mercy : the signs of mercy in the coats of skin with which God clothed them, and the sounds of mercy in these sweet words, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. iii. 15). This is the mustard-seed from which the whole gospel-tree has sprung. That one verse tells Adam of a Saviour—a human Saviour—of the woman's seed ; a suffering Saviour—"thou shalt bruise his heel ;" and a conquering Saviour—"it shall bruise thy head." As their eyes or thoughts turned to Paradise, what fears would affright their souls ! How keenly they would feel their sin and folly ! But they would keep that saying in the fifteenth verse, and ponder it in their hearts ; and they would thank God that, though they had lost Eden, they had not lost hope.

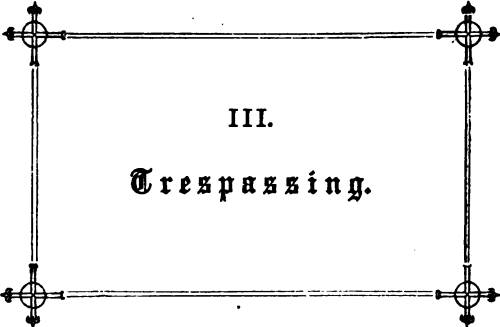
As the earth turns upon two poles, so the Bible turns upon the two great facts in this chapter—the fact of sin, and the fact of salvation. Sin was brought into the world by the first Adam, and salvation by the Second Adam. I knew a girl of eleven or twelve years of age who, I think, knew a great deal about these two facts. She maintained that she had put her trust in Christ, and seemed astonished that I could doubt it ; and, indeed, I had no reason to doubt it. In answer to my question, she said, "The Spirit was striving with me long, and, after a while, I just cam' to believe what the Bible says about sin ; an' after that, I just cam' to believe what the

Bible says about the Saviour." I was equally pleased with the words and the spirit of her reply. God help you, my reader, just to believe what the Bible says about sin and the Saviour; and then, as the garden in Revelation is more glorious even than the garden in Genesis, you will one day dwell in a better home than Adam lost, into which no serpent shall ever enter, and out of which no inhabitant shall ever be driven.

" Praise to His rich, mysterious love !
E'en by our fall we rise,
And gain for earthly Eden lost,
A heav'nly Paradise."







III.

Trespassing.





“ I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.”—PSALM xxxii. 5.

AS you walk along the road you often see a long pole with a board, on which these words are painted, “ Trespassers will be punished according to Law.” The road is the Queen’s highway, and is perfectly free to you. Nobody can blame you for walking along it. But the field on the other side of the hedge belongs to the landlord, and he can do what he likes with his own property. If you step over into it, you break the law of the land, and may be punished for it. God has fenced in with laws a highway along which we are to walk in life’s journey. He has made us and all things, and has every right in the world to lay down laws for us. We are under His laws, and we can never get away from them. We might as easily escape from the air or from ourselves as escape from God’s laws, which belong to our very being. Sin is a

breaking of these laws, and so it is often called a transgression or trespass.

May the gracious Spirit help me to explain the words of David which you have read. They tell us—

I. What Sin is ; and,

II. How to get rid of it.

I. What Sin is.—The Apostle John writes : “Sin is the transgression of the law ” (1 John iii. 4). But what law is meant ? God has many laws—laws for the stars, the tides, the spring, and for everything. But among all these there is one that is the law of laws, and it is here called *the* law. It binds man to love and serve God. This law is as old as man, for it was in him when he was born ; and it is written in the hearts of all men as well as in the Word of God. When we speak of the law, we usually mean the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Around that rugged and awful mountain all the children of Israel were gathered. Bounds were set round about, through which none should pass on pain of death. God descended upon the mountain amid thunderings and lightnings and clouds ; the mount quaked, and the people trembled. Thus with every sign of majesty was the law given ; for the law is the most solemn thing in the world for sinful men. The commandments were written by the finger of God upon two tables of stone. They declare what we should be and do toward God

and men. As ten shillings are summed up in the piece of gold we call a half-sovereign, so the ten commandments are all summed up in one golden rule, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." In His Sermon on the Mount, our Saviour teaches that the law has to do chiefly with our spirits. It goes into all the hidden corners of our hearts, and judges our most secret thoughts. It condemns evil desires quite as much as evil actions. The law is like the boundary set round about Mount Sinai when God spake to Moses. It is a sacred line drawn by God, fencing off forbidden things. Thus the Bible very often calls sin a trespass or transgression. These two words mean the very same thing—stepping over a line, or breaking through a fence, or crossing a boundary. I remember a thrilling account of a crew who had despaired of saving their ship. In their frenzy many of the sailors wished to take possession of the stores, that they might drown their fears with strong drink. The captain, with a drawn sword, stood on a line running across the deck, and with a merciful severity threatened to cut down the first man who crossed it. The sailor who dared to step over that line disobeyed his captain, and became a transgressor. The first sin makes my meaning very plain. God drew a line with His law around one tree. Adam and Eve might roam at pleasure through the rest of the garden, only they were not to go over the sacred, though unseen,

fence around that one tree. But they broke through it, and became sinners. The first sin was "the transgression of the law." And, like every sin, it was also rebellion against God. For the law and the Lawgiver cannot be separated. It is a dreadful thing to break the law of the land ; for all the rulers are behind the law, and they seize the law-breaker, and take him to prison and punishment. But to break God's law—what shall we say about that ? A minister, who lay for some months on his death-bed, wrote to his friends, that he felt like a man on whom the great eye of the holy God was resting. For months he had to look straight into that piercing eye. Though he had lived a blameless life, he felt that he was a miserable sinner, and that every hope of heaven would have perished in his heart, had it not been for the mercy of the Saviour. Every one who knows God's law has the same feeling. His prayer is, God be merciful to me the sinner.

Sin is also a *debt*. In repeating the Lord's Prayer, you sometimes say "forgive us our trespasses," and sometimes "forgive us our debts." Christ has given us both these words. Sin is, as to the act, a trespass ; and, as to the result of it, a debt which brings punishment upon men. You know what sin is when you know the meaning of a trespass and a debt. A debt is what is due. Sin is nothing else than not to give God His due. Duties not done are debts not paid. Trespassing often brings men into debt, and it is our trespassing that has caused all our debts to the holy Lord. Oh, what a

curse debt is! How its hated burden crushes a man's heart. Debt is a thing of the past; you cannot see it, or touch it with your finger, and say, "there it is;" yet it is a reality. You remember the first picture in the *Pilgrim's Progress*—poor Christian with the big burden on his back. That mysterious burden is made up by his sins, or his spiritual debts. It is the strange thing called guilt that makes him so miserable. Oh! who will take the burden off?

Your debts are very great. Every time you have passed over God's sacred boundary line, you have added to the black list. Your evil words and thoughts, your failures to love God and man as you ought, are more than misfortunes, or weaknesses, or blots. All these are not only shameful, but also sinful. Though we may have forgotten our debts, a correct account of them has been kept in the book above. No false entries there; the recording angel makes no mistakes. You are drowned in debt. Were you to call in all your old debts, you would confess with David that they are more than the hairs on your head. In one of his parables (Matt. xviii. 23), our Saviour likens the sinner to a king's servant, who owed ten thousand talents, that is, more than three millions of pounds sterling. But he was a very poor man, and could not pay one farthing of it. He was a hopeless bankrupt till his Lord freely forgave him the mighty sum. That is exactly our case. This is the very first lesson we learn in Christ's school—that we have many trespasses, and that it is for ever impossible for

us to pay our debts. People talk about reforming, and turning over a new leaf. But what are we to do with the old leaves—these bungled, blotted, shameful leaves which make up the book of our past. Oh, these debts ! It is a blessed thing to believe fully that you have not a penny of your own to meet them with. Until you know this, you are like a boy trying to spell forgiveness, who yet does not know his A B C. When you know it, you are in the fair way of learning what is next to be done. You will then be eager to know—

II. **How to get rid of Sin.**—"We all need to settle our accounts with God betimes," a man once said to his dying brother, who replied, "I know no way, my dear brother, to settle accounts with God, but by receiving a free pardon through my Redeemer." In order to get rid of sin something is needed on our part, and something on God's part ; you must confess, and God must forgive. "I said, I will confess, and thou forgavest."

You must confess. Nothing can be done till we own our guilt. You have seen a bad boy disgraced, and put out of the room ; and afterwards you have seen him pardoned. But he had first to confess his fault, and say he was sorry for it, and ask to be forgiven. Your mother never gives you the kiss of forgiveness till you have confessed your sin. Pardon without confession would be an encouragement to sin, and it would utterly destroy a parent's authority. Now our heavenly Father

never pardons His sinning children till they have sincerely confessed all their transgressions. Millions of transgressors have been pardoned, but not one of them without confession. Every one of them has said with the prodigal, "Father, I have sinned." For some time after his shameful sin, David, as he tells us in this psalm, did not confess his transgressions. He wished, if it were possible, to cheat God and man about it ; there was guile in his spirit. He "kept silence" (ver. 3). That means a great deal more than that he was silent. He was like a stubborn boy who sullenly stiffens himself up, and determines not to yield. His soul then grew so wretched under sin known but unconfessed, that he fell into ill health. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old . . . my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." But at last he frankly owns his sins, and spreads them all out before God. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." Transgressions—ah, what a multitude of them ! "*My* transgressions." Yes, they are mine more than anything else is mine, except my own soul. My clothes and books are mine ; but I can give them away or sell them, and they are mine no more. My money is mine ; but a thief may make it his to-night. My limbs are mine ; but they may be cut off, and given to the earth, while I still live. My body is mine ; but death may lay it in the dust, and I—my soul, the immortal spirit, my own self—shall live apart. But woe is me ! my sins are mine more than my very body is mine. Not all the changes of time, not death itself,

not all created powers, can cut asunder, can even touch the strange tie that binds my sins to myself. But, thank God, my sins are not myself; they may be taken from me. The hand of Almighty love can untie the bands that bind this burden to my soul. He will, if I ask Him. For every penitent sinner finds a pardoning God. A full confession secures punishment from an earthly judge, but pardon from the heavenly. Hear David's testimony: "I said, I will confess"—no sooner said than done—"and thou forgavest." David's confession was cut short by the Lord's forgiveness. David was forgiven as soon as he confessed in his heart; he had not time, it seems, to make confession with his lips. "I will confess," he said, and already he was forgiven. Pardon came in between the confession of the heart and the confession of the lips. The Lord did not keep him waiting; He kept the Lord waiting. The prodigal son had not to wait long. His first stammering sentence was broken in the middle by the sweet words of forgiveness. What a great forgiver God is! How full, and free, and speedy, and generous is His pardon! He waits to be gracious, like the loving mother who only waits for the first sign of sorrow in her wayward boy. He waits only till the soul says, "I will confess," and then the voice confessing is drowned in the kiss of forgiveness.

The way in which God forgives is explained in the second verse of this psalm, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." The Apostle

Paul also says in 2 Cor. v. 19, "Not imputing their trespasses unto them." To impute is to reckon, to set down to one's account, or opposite one's name. If you buy an article in a shop, but don't pay in ready money, the merchant puts the price opposite your name in his book ; he imputes the debt to you. If the article is for your father, he imputes the debt to your father. A pardoned man is one to whom the Lord imputes not his trespasses or debts. A ploughman, who was some £12 in debt, was once cast into prison by his creditor. As he was the only bread-winner in a large family, his wife and children were starving. A rich man, who had been at school with the ploughman, was touched with pity, and paid the whole sum. The debt was no longer imputed to the ploughman ; nothing stood against him ; the prison doors were opened ; he was justified and publicly acquitted, and returned with joy to his weeping wife and dancing children. He owed his freedom to his friend who had paid all for him. So the sinner's debts have been imputed to Christ, and Christ's riches are imputed to the penitent sinner. Our Saviour often speaks of "the remission of sins." A poor widow comes to me with her tax-paper. Upon the back of it I set forth her poverty, and sign my name. Armed with two pleas—her poverty and the name of another—she goes to the tax-gatherer, and gains the remission of her taxes. And so the poor in spirit goes to God, pleading his deep poverty and the name of another, and receives the remission of his sins. I have also two Bible illustrations

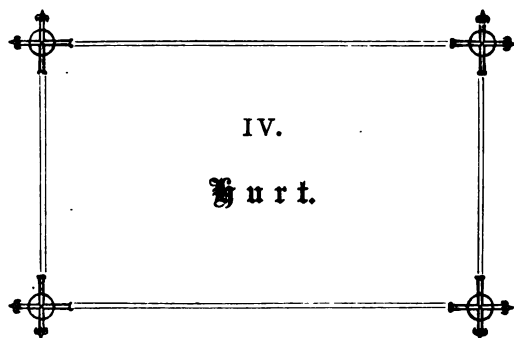
for you. When Nabal had wronged David, Abigail stepped in as mediator (1 Samuel xxv. 14-35). She took up her wicked husband's case as if it had been her own. "Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine hand-maid;" impute it all to me, and not to my poor husband. And David said, "See, I have hearkened to thy voice, and accepted thy person." As David for Abigail's sake forgave Nabal, so God for Christ's sake forgives us. How beautiful also is the case of Onesimus. He had robbed his master, and fled to Rome. There Paul found him, and led him to the Saviour. The apostle then wished him to be reconciled to man as well as to God. He sent him back to Philemon, his master, with a most beautiful letter, in which he says, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account," or impute it to me, that is the very word. "I Paul have written it with mine own hand: I will repay." What Paul did for Onesimus, our Jesus does for us in an infinitely higher way. We have wronged, and robbed, and forsaken God. We tremble, and dare not return. But our Friend takes up our case, and acts as our Peace-maker, Intercessor, and Surety. Through Him we are not only pardoned, but also preferred, as the pardoned Joseph became Pharaoh's favourite, and as the pardoned slave Onesimus became Philemon's brother.

As the shining stars are in the sky for multitude, so are the words of forgiveness in the Bible. Here is

another of them : " Having forgiven you all trespasses ; blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross " (Col. ii. 13). Accounts were written then on slate-like little tables filled with wax. When the debt was paid, by rubbing the wax quite smooth the hand-writing was blotted out, so that no trace of it remained. The wax tables were then laid by for future use. There was a hand-writing against Christ's people, which was contrary to them, for whichever way they turned it met them like a horrid spectre. But God our Saviour has blotted out the hand-writing, and nailed it to His cross, like an old account discharged in full.

David begins this psalm by saying, " Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven ;" and at its close he says, " Many sorrows shall be to the wicked." God tells you that the forgiven sinner is blessed, and millions of Christians tell you that it is so. God tells you that the wicked shall be wretched, and millions more, who have proved it, tell you the same tale. Unforgiven sin is the greatest curse in earth or hell. If you are a Christian, the Saviour does not promise you health, or wealth, or success in life, or earthly honours. All these things may be denied ; but one thing He does promise—you shall be blessed. God bless you henceforth, and for ever more. Amen.









IN the forest or garden you have often seen little lobes of gum on the bark of such trees as the fir-tree. That thick juice or oil comes from the heart of the tree, and forms itself on the outside like tears on the cheek, or great drops of sweat on the body. In the dark forests of Gilead many trees yielded a peculiar gum called balm, which was famed as a cure for all sorts of flesh-wounds, bruises, and sores. In Jeremiah's day it was the most popular ointment; and it was well known and highly prized as far back as the time of Joseph; for the Ishmaelites who bought him were from Gilead, "with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt." It is to this Jeremiah refers in his broken-hearted lament, which we shall now examine: "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people

recovered?" (Jer. viii. 21, 22). The sins and sorrows of his native land fill him with wonder and sadness. It is so strange and mad that when the heavenly Physician with healing balm is within their reach, they are content to let the hurt of their souls fester and spread. He can only weep for them; it would be a relief to him if he could weep day and night over their sin and folly.

In the last address I shewed you that sin is a trespass. Aided, I hope, by God's grace, I shall now shew you that it is also a *disease*. For sin has two sides. It is first against God, and then against man; it works upwards against heaven, and also downwards into the soul like a deadly plague; it is a crime against God, and a hurt to ourselves. The prodigal said, I have sinned against heaven; and he might have said as truly, I have sinned against myself.

I wish to give you the history of diseased souls that have been cured. It has three parts:—

I. Our Hurt.

II. Our Healing.

III. Our Health.

I. OUR HURT.—You often hurt yourselves; but the bruise is slight, only skin-deep, not worth speaking of, and though smarting at first, soon heals of itself. But sometimes a hurt ends in disease and death. And such

is the dreadful hurt in your heart by sin. Unless it be healed your soul shall die.

1. *This disease is deceitful.*—Every way sin deceives us. Sin is like some kinds of consumption. The sick man has no fear, no pain ; he tells you that little ails him, and that he will soon be himself again ; but the disease is growing noiselessly all the while, and soon the green grass is waving over his grave. And so often the soul under sin wastes away, and the sinner becomes “past feeling,” and is cheated into the idea that he is well enough. It was so with the Pharisees who thought that they were whole, and needed not the Physician.

While this disease is in all, it does not shew itself in all alike. Jeremiah's lament was for all the daughters of his people, as every one of them had the hurt. It is with our souls as with our bodies. One is bigger, stronger, fairer than another ; but death lurks in all, and will soon lay them in the dust. Sin is in every soul, though it bursts out more in some than in others. It runs in the blood ; we were born with it. “Behold, I was shapen in sin,” says David. We are “by nature the children of wrath even as others.” This disease is handed down from father to son, from our first father to all men.

Leprosy, you know, is the standing Bible picture of our soul's disease. Only once in my life have I seen lepers. At Bergen, in Norway, I was walking with a Norwegian gentleman past an hospital which, he told

me, was full of lepers. A little further on we passed six boys sitting on a bench by the roadside. "All these," he said to me, "are lepers." I looked at them. Two or three had frightful-looking faces. These poor boys had that kind of leprosy called *elephantiasis*, because it makes their skin like the skin of an elephant. They hardly looked like human beings, the skin on their faces stood out so hard, and wrinkled, and discoloured. But the rest of these young lepers looked as healthy as you do; yet the awful disease had poisoned their blood, though it had brought no plague-spot upon the face. And so the sinner is often beautiful outwardly, while the deceitful leprosy spreads within.

2. *This hurt is deadly.*—Some slight hurts, if let alone, soon heal up. "The healing power of nature," as it is called—one of God's greatest mercies—often works wonders where the doctors fail. But then, the nature and the body must be in good health. In our soul's disease, however, the nature is unhealthy, and itself diseased. We have not only one or two wounds, but our whole being is tainted with sin. "There is no soundness in us, but from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, we are full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores." So if we let this hurt alone, it will deepen—into death. Dr Lake describes the case of one of his patients who had been hit on the toe by a cricket ball while riding over Hounslow Heath. The man was greatly pained, and on reaching Brentford,

sent for a surgeon, who was for cutting off the toe. The patient ridiculed the idea, but as the pain increased, the next day he consulted another surgeon in London, who told him that his foot must be taken off. He would not hear of that. In a day or two mortification seized his leg, and struck up into his body, and he died. The soul's hurt is both deceitful and deadly ; to let it alone is certain death.

"The incurables"—what a terrible state theirs is ! They can be only a little relieved, but never healed. But no soul is incurable, thank God ; for there is balm in Gilead and a Physician there. The saddest thought to Jeremiah was, that the people neither felt their hurt, nor desired its cure. It was this that fairly broke his heart, and wrung from him his woful cry, "I am black, astonishment hath taken hold of me." To the blessed angels, the sinner who knows the gospel, and is quite careless, must seem the strangest and maddest of beings—most anxious to get the diseases of his perishing body healed, but letting the deadly disease of his imperishable soul run riot within him. God be praised, we are not incurables, for He has told us of—

II. Our Healing.—A sick man needs both a cure and a doctor to apply it. He may apply the right cure in the wrong way, or in the wrong quantity, and so make the cure worse than the disease. Here you have all you need for your soul's healing ; both balm and physician are at hand.

Balm, or balsam, means the lord or chief of oils, or the sovereign remedy. A little plant in our fields is called "all-heal," because it was thought to heal all ailments. The balm of Gilead was a sort of all-heal among the Jews. Maybe, like some ointments now advertised over the world, its reputation was greater than its virtue; but, at all events, it was a most useful oil at a time when oils were the chief medicines. It had a delicious smell, and was most cooling and soothing to the festering wound. I need hardly tell you that the Physician is Jesus. His very name means Healer, and points out His chief joy, His chosen work on earth and in heaven. What a Healer is ours! Think of His skill, His tenderness, His fame, His nearness, His readiness at all times. We adore Thee, O thou Healer of sin-smitten souls! For Thy name's sake make us perfectly whole.

1. *There is only one Physician*, and He has only one way of healing.—What a mercy that is! A dying minister laid his hand upon his Bible, and said admiringly, "This is God's great medicine-book, full of recipes for every spiritual malady." But all our diseases are one at bottom, and that is sin; and for sin and all its sores Jesus has His own sovereign remedy. Men have always been seeking healing for their hurts, but only His divine hand can reach the deep source of them all. I once heard a working man pray very beautifully, "O God, we thank Thee for the balm of nature, we thank Thee for the balm of books, we thank Thee for the balm of friendship and of family love; but we thank Thee most

of all for the balm of Gilead, which heals all the diseases of our souls." A dying man, panting for breath, told me that, though he had tried many doctors, he was always getting worse. Losing patience he had called in one or two pretenders whom somebody had recommended. I said to him, "Well, what a blessing it is, that you have no choice of remedies for the soul, and that you are at no loss to whom to go, as there is only one name whereby we must be saved." With a peculiar smile, which was a mixture of sadness and sympathy, he replied, "Ah, yes! there is no quackery there; all is reality there." Yes, sin is the one root of all the soul's maladies. It is a disease which man cannot cure, but which Christ can.

2. *And He must have the whole work of healing you.*—I have known a doctor leaving a sick man in anger, because he would not follow his directions, but allowed some meddler to have a hand in the case. Be sure you keep closely by Christ's instructions; for you may easily fall into mistakes about the cure, as Naaman did. It would save us a world of trouble if we took our own hand out of the work, and the hand of every one else, so that Jesus might have the whole work and glory of our healing. For He never helps to heal; He heals out and out.

3. *With His own hand He must apply the balm to our wound.*—Watch that Jewish shepherd, whose flesh has been torn by the lion and the bear. He has the balm in his tent and hand; but that is not enough.

The physician is sent for, as the case is serious. He does not put the balm on the outside—that were to heal lightly, or hide the wound. He opens up the wound wide, till it is like a gaping mouth to drink in the balm. He cleans it carefully though it smarts sore, and the shepherd cries out ; for he “ must be cruel, only to be kind.” Then he pours in the oil till it reaches the very bottom of the gash, and touches every particle of the bleeding flesh. The kind physician’s eye kindles with delight as he sees the sore dripping with abundance of balm. How delicious the odour ! How it refreshes the fainting sufferer ! How softly and sweetly it relieves the pain ! Soon the two lips of the wound that stood apart, are gently drawn together, and grow into one ; the healthy skin covers them ; not a scar remains. Everything, you see, depends on applying the balm. De Quincey tells that, when a schoolboy in Manchester, he had ailments that were aggravated by a bungling apothecary, who prescribed for him. At last he could bear it no longer ; he ran away from school. He writes that, on the day of his flight, there lay in Manchester probably a shipload of mercury, one fragment of which, not so large as an acorn, would have changed his whole life, and saved him from years of fierce pain. But he and it were not brought together, and for him it was all the same as if there had not been one grain of mercury in the world. And so you may have a shipload of Bible knowledge in your head, but unless it sink down into your heart as balm soaks into

the wound, your malignant disease will not be checked. The remedy of Christ's blood and Spirit must reach your inmost soul ; for the heavenly balm puts forth its healing virtue only when it is closely applied to the naked wound.

Jesus is *the* Physician ; all other physicians are but poor shadows of Him. Rowland Hill once thus introduced Dr Jenner, the discoverer of vaccination, to his uncle—"Lord Hill, let me introduce to you Dr Jenner, who has saved more lives than any other man alive." Dr Jenner looked grave, and said, "I wish I could say, like you, souls." The Doctor was right, for there is no healing like soul-healing. Then the Physician is for the sick ; they that are whole need Him not. Never dream for one moment that you are too bad, and that you must wait till you are better. Go straight to Him as you are.

I wish to do with you what they did with their dead and sick of old, when they brought them to Christ that He might touch them. As all the Gospels shew, Jesus loves to draw near young and old, and touch them. And His is no rough touch of an ungentle hand, causing needless pain. Ever in presence of the sick His heart was moved with compassion, and His hand stretched forth to heal. O Thou good Physician, touch us, and make us clean and whole every whit.

III. Our Health.—Here is a boy recovering from a weary and a painful illness ; for the first time out of

his bed-room, his knees trembling under the weight of his body. He is neither to hold nor bind, half mad for very joy. His joy overflows upon you, and makes you joyful too; it is more infectious than his fever was. He is not sure whether to laugh or weep; and he does both. You see his tears, like a sunshiny shower, brightened by the smiles and joy behind them. To have the brain clear and unclouded, the nerves strong, the thrill of health through all the muscles, the blood flowing on peacefully like a river whose streams make glad the whole body; to be now a great burden, a heavy handful to nobody—oh, the joy of it! And what wonder if there be great joy in that soul whose hurt has been turned into health. What wonder if he should feel like the cripple whom Peter healed at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful, when at Peter's touch new health like an electric shock ran through his frame, and he entered into the Temple, "walking and leaping; and praising God."

But do not expect joy all at once; do not be cast down if you have no joy at all. A famous London doctor, as I read in a book written by his friend, had an only and much-loved daughter. Once, when he was from home, she took fever. "Oh, if my father were here," she cried, "I should soon be better!" Soon he was by her side. He examined her, and said, "Now, my dear, don't get alarmed. I understand your illness perfectly. It has been taken in good time. I have cured hundreds of cases like yours, and I am sure that I

can cure yours too." All her fears fled at her father's words. That's faith—the very thing. She had faith in the physician and his cure. She had perfect faith in his love, for he was her father; and she had a child's perfect faith in his skill. All you need is, to have the like faith in Jesus our Healer. Examine this girl's case; for, to my thinking, it makes the matter as plain as noonday. She had faith when she had no happy feeling; she had faith in spite of her feelings. The fever was still raging, and the burning thirst was still there; but the moment she believed her father's word, the fear of death fled, and she had peace. She was too dutiful and trustful to say, "I'll not believe my father's word till I feel that all my pain is gone." She knew that that happy feeling would come by-and-by; and so she left her case without a fear in her father's hands, and just did what he bade her. She took his medicines; the pain yielded, and soon she had the joyful feeling of returning health.

I wish we all treated our heavenly Healer as that girl treated her father. Jesus comes to heal you. He says that He is able and willing to do it. Only trust him, and you will have such joy as that girl had the moment she trusted her father.

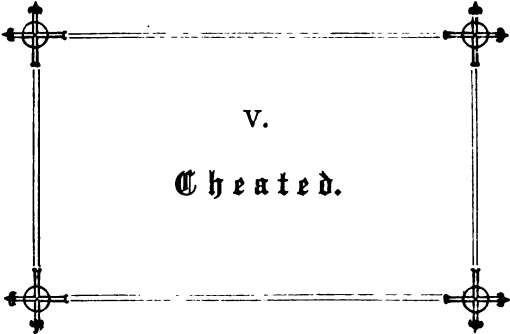
" If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives should be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord."

Yield your heart to His gracious remedy, and then you

will have also the joy of health. But these two joys are different : the one comes from God's naked word, the other from God's gracious work in the soul. With such a Physician, and such promises, why is your hurt not healed ? Christ weeping over Jerusalem gives the reason why : " How often would I . . . but ye would not."

All the healed should act like invalids and convalescents who are just recovering from sickness, and greatly afraid of a relapse. And they should have much pity for those who are yet in sin. Like Jeremiah, we should all feel hurt by the hurt of the daughter of our people.

O Christ, Thou good Physician, have mercy on us. May Thy good spirit shew us the hurt of our souls, how deceitful, how deadly it is. Make us most thankful for the balm that can heal our hurt. And make us willing, yea, most anxious to be healed by Thee. Oh, help us to trust Thee ! And may our souls be in health, that we may serve Thee, now and evermore. Amen.



V.

C h e a t e d.





IN your school books you have read many beautiful fables that have come down to us from ancient times. It would take a big book to hold all the old-world fables and stories about our present subject, for it is spoken of in hundreds of books besides the Bible. You have heard, for example, of Hercules, the most famous of all the ancient heroes. One of the best known stories of the old world is about him. When he was eighteen years of age, he went out into a lonely thicket to consider what sort of a life he should choose. A young woman with painted cheeks, and covered with dazzling jewels, came running to him. All the while she was looking round anxiously to see whether she was admired. She wished the lad to take her as his guide through life. She told him nothing but lies. She promised ease, the finest clothes, splendid horses, gay company, and every enjoyment. When he asked her name, she replied, "My name is Pleasure, but people nickname me Vice." Soon there came to

him another young woman, plain in dress, and modest in bearing. She besought him to follow her. She told him that if he did so, he must deny himself, and lead a life of toil, but that he would receive at last a great reward. "My name is Virtue," she said. That fable became famous, because every one felt it to be true to life. Ulysses is another of the best known names of the old world. In his homeward voyage from Troy he came, as the story goes, to the island of the Sirens. These were three sisters, charming in face and voice, who sat in a flowery meadow close to the sea; and with their sweet singing so charmed the sailors that they steered their ships straight to them. But the rocks on which the Sirens sat were crawling with serpents, and the beach, covered with the bones of men whom they had lured, shone afar off with whiteness, like chalky cliffs. Yet the terrible warning was lost on the sailors. From every age, and country you might gather such fables, and they all teach one of the great truths of the Bible about sin. It is that *sin is a terrible deceiver. Sin always cheats men.* You will find that truth much more plainly stated in our text, Hebrews iii. 13, "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." O our God, may Thy warnings make us greatly afraid of sin's snares! Put us in fear lest we should be enticed and ruined. Sin deceives us, because—

I. It seems what it is not.

II. It says what it does not.

III. It hardens while we know it not.

I should like also to tell you—

IV. The secret of our safety.

I. Sin seems what it is not.—Sin is the ugliest and most shocking thing in the world ; but, oh, how it sometimes bewitches men, and appears perfectly charming ! Sin makes man the foe of God, and brings eternal ruin upon him ; yet it often shines before the soul in dazzling colours, and looks the finest thing in all the world. Only the good and the true is really beautiful, had we the eyes to see it. There is an ancient fable about Vice stealing the clothes of Virtue, and wearing them, so that Virtue now goes unadorned through the world. Thus sin shines in borrowed colours. How it cheated angels and men ! The angels hoped to gain heaven by it ; but it cast them down to hell. It changed these bright spirits into devils. To Adam and Eve the fruit of the forbidden tree seemed good, and a thing to be desired ; but death lurked under the fair form. And so far every sin is like the first sin of angels and men. To the prodigal son, for example, sin seemed freedom and fulness of life and joy ; but it was shame, friendlessness, starvation, and slavery. One of the old teachers of the world, who knew nothing about the Bible, used to say that man's chief business is "to deal with appearances ; and to distinguish between what really is, and what seems."

He held that among men he only is blest who is not "the dupe of appearances." And he was right, for all evil things seem what they are not ; and could we but strip sin of its false dresses, we should shudder, and flee away. To be hated, it needs but to be seen in the light of truth. In the old cathedral at Nüremberg I have seen a splendid sermon in stone upon this subject. It is a beautiful statue of a smiling woman. A crowned queen she is, decked with jewels, holding out an apple, the sign of sin. After we had admired the statue, the guide took us round, and with a grin pointed to the other side. Her back was covered with the foulest wounds, on which vipers were feasting. It was all seeming—mere painted show—in the front ; but on the other side we saw the terrible reality. It is a thousand pities that many who see the smiling face and tempting gifts, never think of the dead men's bones and corruption within. When you see men who have made themselves monsters by the lengths they have gone in sin, behold in them what sin will do to you if you yield to it. I have known a great drunkard looking at a wretched blasphemer as he came out of the door of a whisky-shop, and saying to himself, "What a monster of a man that is !" At once it flashed across him, "But I am no better myself." He resolved there and then to give up drink ; he is now a pillar in the house of God, and often he visits the very spot where he first saw his sin in its true colours. God grant that in his light you may see light clearly. Then will the spell of sin be

broken, and you will see sin to be exceedingly vile, and hateful as hell itself, while what is good will appear infinitely beautiful. Remember the words which the Bible makes ring so often in our ears; and the experience of every man and woman repeats the warning—"Be not deceived."

II. Sin says what it does not, or promises what it never performs. This is the second part of "the deceitfulness of sin." David speaks of those who turn aside to lies, and by lies he means sins, which are living lies, acted lies. We are also warned against "lying vanities" and "refuges of lies." All these passages shew that sin in all its forms is a lie. We know little about sin till we think of it as mixed up with the devil, wicked men, and our hearts, which are "deceitful above all things." As sin is the great cheat, so Satan is the great cheater of men; and sinners, and our own hearts are his chief helpers. Thus the cunning serpent deceived Adam and Eve; and as sin crept into the world in a base, sneaking, serpent-like way, so it has been working under ground ever since. The beloved disciple describes Satan as the deceiver of the whole world. We are often told about his wiles, devices, snares, deep plots, by which, if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect. What a blessing if we were as frightened for his snares as birds are for the snares of the bird-catcher. I have often watched the

birds, when they seemed to me more cunning than the fowler. If any poor bird was once seen fluttering in the gin, the rest were scared away from the danger. But it is not in vain that Satan spreads his snares for our souls; his baits lure many to their undoing. Then what shall I say about our evil hearts, that give such encouragement to the deceiver; or, about "evil men and seducers," and "the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive"? You see now how sin cheats us with false promises. This part of sin's deceitfulness is well illustrated by a famous picture called "The Temptation of Saint Anthony." The saint sits in his cell, and before him stands a lady with winsome face and purple robes, holding out a golden cup. Her toes are seen peeping out—they are eagle's claws with which she tears the drinker to death. The picture at the beginning of our book makes the subject plain to the eye. There you see Satan playing a game with a young man for his soul. The arch of the dark vault is formed by two creeping monsters with horrid claws. The chess-board is the lid of a stone coffin. Its front shews the figure of a weeping woman crushed with the loathsome tails of two hideous creatures. That represents a soul in the devil's chains. At the arm of the chair is an open-mouthed lion, whose claws grasp a human skull. Of the pieces on Satan's side, the king, with a crooked feather in his cap, represents Satan. The queen, a woman holding out the intoxicating cup, is Pleasure. Then you have Indolence, with a sow's head, sleeping on

an unhewn block ; Anger, a turkey-cock in a rage ; Pride, with a peacock's tail, spurs on his heels, an order on his breast, a full purse in one hand, and the other stretched out as if giving command ; Falsehood, with a cat's head, and a dagger behind back ; Avarice, lean, gnawing his own hand, and holding a chest under his arm ; and impudent Unbelief, kicking against the cross. The eight pawns are Doubts, small, harpy-like creatures, with sharp teeth, and bat's wings. On the other side, the king represents man's Soul. The queen, holding a cross, is Religion. The officers are Hope, with the anchor ; Truth, with torch and shield ; Peace, with the palm (already in Satan's hand) ; and in the corner near it, Humility, with head bent in prayer ; Innocence, a little child with hand held out for help ; and Love, two children kissing. The pawns are the heads of worshipping angels, and represent Prayer. Satan is winning. He has already taken from the youth Peace, Love, Innocence, Humility, and five angels' heads ; he has robbed him of all these virtues, and nearly destroyed his faith in prayer. The youth has mastered only one doubt, and one vice, Anger. Satan is pressing forward all his forces—Pleasure, Unbelief, Evil Doubts, &c.—against Religion, which stands protecting the Soul. For there is hope of a man, so long as religion is not clean lost. What a deep designing eye Satan has ! His very hairs stand stiffly out with determination, like the hairs of a tiger about to crush its victim. He glories in the ruin he hopes soon to complete. But how sad and

care-worn is the youth's face ! Sin is the hardest work he ever tried ; and he now fears that all may be lost. But when he began, nobody was more light-hearted than he. All is explained by one word—*Cheated*. By lying promises Satan drew him into sin's hazardous game ; and he is winning it by playing falsely. But heaven as well as hell strives with man for the prize of his precious soul. Thus the angel looks on sadly ; and will, we may hope, by awakening his fears and his conscience, rescue the youth from his crafty enemy. I remember one who tried that game, and lost it, so far as man could see. On his funeral day his family received in stern silence the large company that was drawn together by pity for the dead, and respectful sympathy with the living. They shed no tears, their grief was too great for tears ; the fountain of their sorrow was deeper than the fountain of tears. No one had the heart to ask any questions about the illness and last days of the departed. As we darkened the road to the churchyard, the only words that broke the painful silence were, " Ah, poor fellow ! " As I stood at the grave's mouth, and heard the dull thud of the first shovelful on the coffin-lid, I thought, " Poor fellow, how cruelly, how terribly he has been cheated." He came to town a clever, promising lad. He was gay, daring, and warm-hearted. Sinners enticed him, and he consented. They spread out before him in the most glowing colours the pleasures to which they would introduce him. He would not live any longer in his shell, he would be a

man among men at once ; he would explore the city, and see life. The first appearances and promises of sin deceived, but charmed him. Heated with the love of pleasure, he shut his eyes to its dangers. Suspicion slept at wisdom's gate, and he thought no ill where no ill seemed. His companions had a most wicked joy when they saw how thoroughly they had made him one of themselves. They saw that his impulsive nature was hurrying him into excesses against which their coolness and experience guarded them ; but not one of them pointed out the danger. He got many a warning, however, from his own conscience, and Christian friends. He laughed at his advisers as stupid, soulless people, who had no taste for enjoyment. By-and-by sterner warnings came. He was injured more than once in a drunken frolic ; when he came to himself, he was in the Infirmary, with bones aching, and clothes all torn ; his good name and situation were almost lost. Then the doctor warned him, but he heeded not. At last, when he was little more than five-and-twenty, deadly disease came ; and then he awoke to the awful realities of his position. " Oh, how I have been betrayed ! All is lost, and lost for nothing ! Good God, what a fool I've been ! " he was heard muttering to himself, as he looked back over wasted years, every day of which proved " the deceitfulness of sin. " But his regrets availed not ; he had to go down to the grave amid fierce self-reproaches. One of the saddest things I have met with is the number of fine young men I have

known, who lived not out the half of their days, because they had been deceived, even unto death, by the pleasures of sin. As I muse upon these facts, my heart waxes hot, and the fire burns within me. God help you boys especially to believe that there is not one real pleasure which sin can bring you, and that there is not one real pleasure which sin cannot turn into gall and wormwood. But it is now time to consider how—

III. Sin hardens, while we suspect it not.—

Sin hardens and deceives at the same time ; it deceives by hardening so slowly, silently, and gently, that many never dread the danger till they are hardened past feeling. It is the heart that is hardened ; and, strange to say, it is hardened often by hearing the voice of God. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (vers. 7 and 16). How is this ? How can hearing harden ? A boy in the navy was home lately visiting his friends. He had many wonders to tell his brothers and sisters, and one of them was about his first night on board. When the first gun was fired, he started up, and cracked his crown against the top of his berth ; the next time he gave a start, and soon lay down again ; and before long he could sleep as sound as a top through all the watches. Hearing so hardened him, that he soon became heedless of that noise. A cab-driver at Niagara, told a friend that he had not heard the noise of the waterfall for years ; he had grown quite used to it. But we get as good illustrations

nearer home. The rivet-boys who go inside the boilers when the riveters are at work, sometimes fall asleep though the men are thundering with their enormous hammers within a few inches of their ears. This whole chapter is about the children of Israel in the wilderness. In the thunders of Sinai, and in the gentle tones of mercy, they often heard the voice of God ; but they heeded it not, and so were hardened without knowing it. And their history is ours. We too are Jews, not by birth, but in heart. They were average specimens of men ; and so the apostle warned the Christians in his day, as he warns us, against the deceitfulness of sin. We are told that the gospel is a "savour of life unto life, or of death unto death." How strange that some are hardened even by the blessed gospel itself. Sad it is that some become gospel-proof and gospel-hardened, revival-proof and revival-hardened. Their hearts are like the foot of a bare-footed boy. His foot is soft at first ; but by-and-by it grows hard and harder, till it can stand anything. So many a heart that was once melted by the voice of God becomes hard, and hackneyed, and gospel-beaten.

We have a strange power of growing used to everything that is common. Thus, a warning often repeated "wins no notice, wakes no fear." This is one reason why the wiles of our great enemy often succeed. A gentleman once saw a number of wild ducks feeding in the Tweed. They were scared away by a fir-branch sailing down the river. Soon they returned, when another

branch reached the same spot. They rose this time only for a minute or two, and soon settled down again. Another branch came down, but it did not disturb them much; and then another, but they were not frightened in the least by it. The gentleman was wondering how the branches came so regularly to the same spot, when a strange-looking branch sails past him. Soon it reaches the ducks; and a fox darts out of it, seizes a duck, and makes off. The wiles of the cunning creature! And by such wiles Satan gradually blunts a sinner's fears, until he deceives and devours the soul. One of the farthest back things I can remember is a story told by a minister in a children's sermon. A young minister in America called on a very respectable man in his flock, the father of a large family. The aged man took the minister aside, and said to him, "As you are a young man, I wish to give you an advice. Attend most to the young, for we old people are hopeless subjects. When I was young I was often moved by God's spirit, but I always put off. I am not yet a Christian. I believe all you say, but my heart has grown as hard as the seat I sit on. I am past feeling now, and I expect to die as I have lived." This slow, deceitful hardening of the heart is an awful thing. Oh, our God, preserve us all from it! and shew unto us—

IV. The Secret of our Safety.—That secret is with them who "Consider . . . Christ Jesus" (ver. 1), and hear the Holy Ghost (ver. 7). Sin seems what it

is not, and says what it does not, and causes hardness to spread silently over the soul; but Christ Jesus is "the Truth." He is all He seems, and much more than He seems; He performs all He promises, and He takes away the hardness of the heart. He gives the Holy Ghost, who breaks the snares of Satan, and guides you into all truth. If you wish not to be cheated by sin, you must "Consider . . . Christ Jesus" (ver. 1). A Jew once vowed to murder Luther, but the Reformer's friends sent him a picture of the Jew, that he might be on his guard. So Jesus gives you a picture of the sins that would murder your soul; and He does more, He saves from sin, and guides us in the way of life. Your great danger is "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (ver. 12). But trust in Christ, and be true to Christ; have faith in Christ, and to your faith add fidelity to Christ, and you will be safe amid all sin's snares; for you will then have pleasures which excel all the pleasures of sin, and which surprise, but never cheat us.

The whole Epistle to the Hebrews is about the grace and glory of Jesus; He is the Son of God and man; He is all-mighty and all-merciful; He is our great High Priest, who has shed His blood for us, and for us entered into heaven. He is able to save to the uttermost. His countless attractions should win your heart. All true Christians look on you as the apostle looked on the Hebrews. They know well how beautiful sin often seems, and how it can dazzle you; they know how it

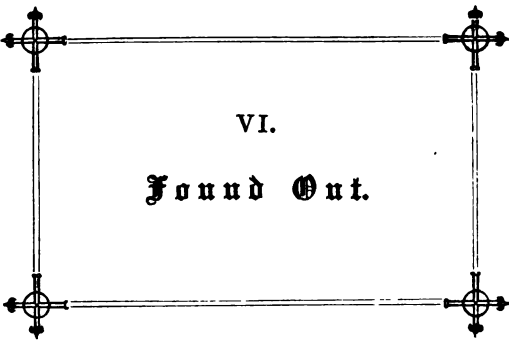
may snare you, and harden your heart ; how easily you may believe its cheats and lies, and "grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain." But they also know that you are safe, if you "consider . . . Christ Jesus."

Your safety also lies in hearing and obeying the voice of the Holy Ghost. For you have not only the words, but the *voice* of God. His words you can find in a book, or another may bring them to you ; but only God Himself, really near you, can make you hear His voice, though it is a voice without sound. And you have often heard it, have you not ? That strange whisper in the ear of your soul about sin, and Christ, and heaven, what is it but the noiseless voice of the Holy Ghost ? And what does it say ? "The Holy Ghost saith *To-day*" (ver. 7). The Devil says *to-morrow*—always to-morrow, till to-morrow becomes too late. All the dangers I have pointed out come from hearing God's voice, and not obeying it at once. Thus Pharaoh's heart was hardened, while little Samuel, who said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," had a tender and blessed heart all his days. I lately met a bright and happy-looking young woman, with her Bible in her hand, on her way, as she told me, to the prayer-meeting. About twelve years ago, at the close of a mission meeting, I spoke to a ragged little girl, and got her address. She was then uncared-for, and lived with a godless family, who were very angry at her for going to the church. Yet she was always at our meetings. I asked her why she came so often. She said she liked to come because

she had got good, and her heart was changed. "How is that?" I asked. "One day," she said, "I came to the children's service, and the text was, 'The Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice,' and"—after a long pause during which she was framing her reply—"and I just heard it." During these twelve years I have seen her often; and, so far as I know, she has been obedient unto the heavenly voice, and has thus been saved from Satan's snares. To you also "the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice." May you also just hear it. Amen.







VI.

Found Out.





ON the map of Palestine, Reuben and Gad lie on the east side of Jordan. When the Israelites, after their forty years' wandering in the wilderness, reached the borders of the Promised Land, these two tribes asked leave to settle down there at once. They also promised to go over Jordan, and help their brethren to drive out their enemies. But Moses was not very sure about them. He told them that if they kept their word, all would be well; and then said, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. xxxii. 23). What a solemn saying! How it grips you! The very sound of the words strikes terror into us. The sinner skulks, and flees, and does all he can to hide himself; but sin is an avenger or detective on his track. The detective follows with slow and noiseless steps, but he is sure. He will not be bribed, he cannot be outwitted by the criminal. He may seize the trembling sinner any day,

and seize him he shall some day. Every sinner has at last to say, like the frightened Ahab, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy!"

There are three worlds in which sin finds us out—

I. The World Around.

II. The World Within.

III. The World Beyond.

I. In the World Around, sin finds the sinner out, for sin is the mother of all shame, sorrow, and suffering. Yet every sinner fancies that sin will not find him out. Visit our prisons. I am sure every prisoner there believed that he would not be caught. He knew that others had been caught, but he expected good luck, as he calls it. He was like the silly gambler who is sure that he will win, lose who may. His sin was done so cleverly, and in the dark. All sinners are like these prisoners. It is amazing in how many ways sin finds men out. In the year 1800, France being then at war with us, a Danish vessel, suspected of being in the French service, was captured at Kingston, West Indies. But the charge could not be proved. The sailors of the warship *Abergavenny*, then at the same station, were amusing themselves with catching sharks. On opening a shark, they found in its maw a pocket-book containing bills of lading, which proved that the captured vessel belonged to the enemy. The captain when pursued had thrown his pocket-book into the sea, and

the shark had devoured it. The captain's sin found him out through the maw of the shark, and his ship became a British prize. As you grow older, and read history, you will gather proofs of my text—millions of them. For all history echoes the words of Moses, the first historian, "Be sure your sin will find you out." All the great writers and poets, especially of the heathen world, have one favourite theme. They trace the career of the successful sinner; he moves along fearless, haughty, defying heaven; but an awful form is on his track, with uplifted hand grasping the flashing sword of justice, and noiselessly stealing nearer and nearer him, while he is surer of nothing than this, that his sin will not find him out. The blow falls upon him like a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky. These great writers love to bring out what is called poetical justice. They shew, what every page of history proves, that with the sinner it is "like for like," and "measure for measure;" the slayer is slain, the cheater cheated, the doer done, the biter bit, the snarer snared in his own net.

"Blood for blood, and blow for blow,
Thou shalt reap as thou didst sow;
Age to age with hoary wisdom
Speaketh thus to men."

I will give you two of the most striking instances of this I have yet met with. In 1693, Louis XIV. of France destroyed the tombs of the emperors at Spiers

by the hand of an officer named Hentz ; and on the very same day in 1793—exactly one hundred years afterwards—by one Hentz, the representative of the people, the tombs of the French kings at St. Denis were broken open, and the ashes of Louis XIV. were the first scattered to the winds. That was a case of ironical retribution, that is, a punishment which seems cruelly to mock the sinner, by giving him his own sin back into his own bosom. The other day a Mormon bishop, named Lee, was shot on the very spot where, twenty years ago, he had massacred a company of emigrants. As he sat down on the coffin provided for his body, while the soldiers were preparing for his execution his eyes rested on a great cross over the grave of his victims, with this inscription, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." One of the shortest and most telling sermons I ever heard, was by a friend who had charge of an hospital. Going round his wards with him one Sabbath morning, we came to a young man, whose secret sins had found him out. As the doctor laid bare his hideous sores—the sight was enough to sicken you—he said in a slow and solemn tone, "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "For"—still uncovering and dressing the running sores—"he that soweth to his flesh, shall of his flesh reap corruption." The poor man's face changed colour, his eyeballs grew larger ; and I felt as if I had been present at the last judgment. "I cannot look on one

of my children," said the father of a large and respectable family, "without seeing in them the effects of the sins of my youth." His sins had ruined his health and theirs. These are not pleasant things to say, but you need to be told them.

The whole Bible is a sermon on my text. The first sin, the sin of Adam and Eve, how soon it was found out! Cain, was not he found out? The very earth cried out against him, and the mark on his forehead advertised his crime to all the world. The sinners in Noah's day were found out by the flood; in Lot's day, by the destruction of Sodom. Joseph's brethren in Egypt, Achan and his Babylonish garments, Gehazi and his gold, Jonah in the storm, Haman hanged on his own gallows, Manasseh and his blood-shedding, Judas and his pieces of silver, Ananias and Sapphira—all, all found out. Think of the children of Israel in the wilderness, under their judges and kings, at the Babylonish captivity, at the destruction of Jerusalem, and now scattered over the earth,—their sin ever finding them out; and every chapter in Revelation reads the same warning. The world around is like the glaciers, those vast rivers of ice, that creep from mountain tops into the Swiss valleys. Sometimes knapsacks, and even travellers, have fallen down the gaps or cracks in them hundreds of feet. But by a sure law of nature, every article at length comes to the surface, and is lifted aloft, as if by hands of snow. So sin somehow is always moving towards the surface.

“ Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o’erwhelm them, to men’s eyes.”

The poet Hood illustrates this point in his poem called “The Dream of Eugene Aram.” Aram had murdered a man, and cast his body into “a sluggish water, black as ink, the depth was so extreme.” Next morning he visited the spot,

“ And sought the black accursed pool,
With a wild misgiving eye ;
And he saw the dead in the river bed,
For the faithless stream was dry.”

He next covered the corpse with a heap of leaves, but a mighty wind swept past, and laid the secret bare before the sun.

“ Then down I cast me on my face,
And first began to weep,
For I knew my secret then was one
That earth refused to keep ;
On land or sea though it should be
Ten thousand fathoms deep.”

II. In the World Within Sin finds us out.
—How wonderful is the little world in every breast over which conscience reigns. Conscience is the voice of God in the soul ; or, as Paul calls it, “the law of God written in the heart.” Thus each is ever hearing about—

“ A silent court of justice in himself,
Himself the judge and jury, and himself
The prisoner at the bar.”

Some sinners are never found out in the world around, they are not openly punished ; but for all that they don't escape. They carry a detective within from whom they might escape if they could tear out their very nature. Conscience finds them out. And how conscience does worry the sinner with remorse ! I must tell you what remorse is. A fox was once caught in a trap, but in the morning we found only one of his legs. The wise creature when caught concluded that it would be better to limp back to his den with three legs, than having four legs, to perish in pain. He turned upon his leg, and gnawed it through. That fox teaches you the exact meaning of remorse ; for the word means to bite backwards, to gnaw one's self. Sin finds the sinner out when conscience devours the soul. That heathen New Zealander understood this, who gave back a shilling he had stolen from the white man, because of the quarrelling going on inside him, as he said, between the good man and the bad man. In the *Times* newspaper there is often a notice headed, "Conscience-money." People who had cheated the tax-gatherer afterwards send the money they should have paid him—found out, not by the tax-gatherer, but by their own conscience. Many criminals have given themselves up to the judge because the prison, and even death itself, was not so dreadful as remorse ; and some, like Judas, have killed themselves because death did not seem so terrible as life tortured by a guilty conscience. Many men have lots of money, and fine houses, and splendid health ; and yet the fixed

scowl on the brow, the curled lip, the fierce eye, the joyless face, the bitter words, shew that they are not happy. Why? Sin has found them out in the world within, and they will not come to the Saviour for pardon and peace. Even Nero, the monster, had to fly from the spot where he had caused his mother to be murdered. Under the lashes of conscience he fancied that he was haunted by her angry ghost, and that he heard the blowing of a ghostly trumpet, and wailings over her tomb. He was like the infidel Lord Lyttleton, who was sometimes so frightened that he rushed into the bedroom of a friend in order that he might, in his company, shield himself from the terrors of the spiritual world. At last he had to forsake his splendid mansion, because it was too near the grave of one whom he had ruined. The poet Byron confesses how his sin found him out. To escape from thoughts of sin and self he took to travelling, as thousands do; but he felt like the unresting Cain, for travellers beyond the seas change their clime, but not their conscience. He writes—

“ What exile from himself can flee?
To zones, though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be,
The blight of life—the Demon Thought.
Through many a clime, 'tis mine to go,
With many a retrospection curst;
And all my solace is to know,
Whate'er betides, I've known the worst.”

Amid the quietest and fairest scenes of nature, vultures preyed without ceasing upon his heart; and he owns—

“ My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies.”

“ Forgetfulness
I sought in all, save where 'tis to be found,
And that I've yet to learn.”

Memory and conscience break out like a plague in the ship in which the prodigal hopes to sail away from his sins. It would be a great mistake to think that only great sinners and great sins are found out by conscience. De Quincey, the opium-eater, tells us what he felt about it. He saw a mighty phantom, ever growing more and more colossal, striding after him in pursuit from forgotten days. One folly—most people would have thought little of it—one folly at the age of seventeen haunted him for more than half-a-century. He used often to liken conscience to the whispering gallery in St Paul's, London. A word whispered ever so gently at one side of the gallery, is loudly re-echoed at the other. In youth, conscience chid him in sullen whispers; in old age, at the other end of his life-gallery, the same conscience spoke to him as in peals of thunder. The still small voice which the boy heeded not, returned to the old man like the crack of doom, in terrible self-reproaches. What an awful discoverer of sin your conscience is! Be sure your sin, whether it be great or small, your every sin will find you out. Augustine says that his old sins haunted him in his dreams. Cowper used to sit in the farthest corner of the room, imagining that the voice of conscience was loud enough

for every one to hear it. Samuel Johnson told a friend, that the reason why he often started, and spoke to himself in company was, that he was upbraiding himself for the sins of his youth. A man, whose outward life was blameless, told me that he once lay at death's door for a few days. He remembered his whole past life, or rather, he saw it all as in a picture. His mind was strangely strengthened and enlarged, so that he was able to take in the whole at once. Little acts done in his boyhood, such as unkind words, and the stealing of little things from his mother and sisters, thousands of such deeds all seemed as if done yesterday, and filled him with a worse pain than that of the body. Oh, how sad it is when on the bed of death conscience, as the Christian poet says,

“ Starts from the down, on which she lately slept,
And tells of laws despised, at least not kept ;
Shews with a pointing finger and no noise,
A pale procession of past sinful joys,
All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd,
And life abused, and not to be suborn'd.
Mark these, she says ; these summon'd from afar,
Begin their march to meet thee at the Bar ;
There find a Judge inexorably just,
And perish there, as all presumption must !”

How pitiful is the case of the man whose sin unfor-
given finds him out, when death is knocking at the
door. I have seen such cases ; and I pray God that I
may never see the like again. Death comes, and the
dying man not ready, declaring that he has no hope !

But death won't wait ! God grant that your sin may find you out now, so that death may find you undis-
mayed.

III. Sin finds us out in the World Beyond.—

Moses does not say when or where our sin will find us out ; but he says that it will surely find us out sometime and somewhere. Many great sinners are never found out on earth, especially in foreign lands, where the law is weak. Their guilty secrets are buried with them in their graves. In others, conscience has been slain or silenced, so that they are not found out in the world within. " But 'tis not so above." Many wicked men die calmly without any fear. Yet sin finds every sinner out before the great white throne.

The wonderful discoveries of science shew us how, in many strange and startling ways, our sins, if not forgiven, may find us out in the other world. A church in Italy was so built by accident, that it formed what is called a whispering gallery. One or two found out the secret ; and when their neighbours were confessing in a whisper their sins to the priest, they heard all distinctly at the other end. Now this whole world may be by design what that church was by accident, and the sinner's whisper on earth may be heard by an ear in heaven. Between earth and heaven there may be an echo, informing against the sinner. Again, science proves that every action leaves a mark that can never be destroyed ; oceans can't wash it out, nor ages wear

it out. Apart from pardoning mercy, we shall have to face an indelible past. You know how photographs are taken. Well, some discoveries suggest that all our deeds may be photographed in the skies. On the judgment-day the sinner may be, as it were, ushered into a room, the walls of which are covered with bright pictures of all his sins. As the poet says—

“Then shall the soul around it call
Impressions gathered here ;
And, pictured on the eternal wall,
The past shall reappear.”

A man of science says, “The air is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said or woman whispered.” Then our actions, our very thoughts may be telegraphed to the skies. The latest discoveries of science may well make us tremble ; for they come very near proving that our deeds make marks by which they may all be easily found out in the world to come. But, be that as it may, God’s word leaves no doubt about the fact. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; and every hidden thing will then be brought to light. To have sin finding us out in this world is painful ; to have sin finding us out in the world within is more painful still ; but to have sin finding us out in the world to come is the most terrible of all, for how shall we ever escape from it there !

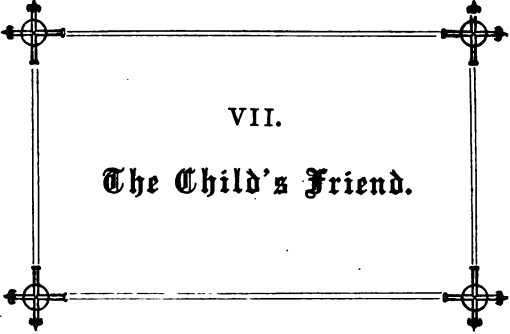
Think what a detective sin is ! A Frenchman, who had been sought for in vain for years by the king’s spies, was one day at a gay party, when, without a moment’s

notice, a detective laid his hand on him, and he was a prisoner. So sin may seize the sinner any moment, and drag him to judgment. But you are a sinner; and what do you mean to do with sin? Be sure it will find you out. And what then? Be beforehand with it; find it out yourself; confess it; go straight to God and the Saviour with it. In the days of Cæsar Augustus, who is mentioned in the New Testament, there lived a great pirate, for whose head a large reward was offered. He said to himself, "I shall surely be caught, now that a hue and cry has been raised against me; Cæsar's warships are scouring the seas, and will hunt me down." He disguised himself, and got into Cæsar's presence, and claimed the reward for the pirate's head. "But where is it?" Cæsar asked. "Here it is," he said, "I am the pirate." He threw himself at Cæsar's feet, implored mercy, and offered to serve in the imperial navy. And he was pardoned. Be like him, except in one point. Do not disguise yourself, but tear off every disguise, and, confessing your sin, make the name of Jesus your only plea. Find out your sin, before it finds you out. Like the Prodigal, inform against yourself before God.

Sin is on your track, like the avenger of old pursuing the Israelite who had shed blood unawares. Like that flying man, haste to the city of refuge. Do not look towards it, or hang about the gate, but get fairly inside without delay. Make Christ your hiding-place, and you are safe. You can never thank God enough for the

Saviour. How dear to our hearts should His grace be ! how welcome His gospel ! Be found in Him, as Paul says ; and then when the avenger seeks you, he will find only Christ, your surety and shield. Be sure that before the great white throne sin will not find out those who are found in Him. Amen.





VII.

The Child's Friend.





EVERY child's Bible I have seen has a picture, usually on the first page, like a painted sign above a door, shewing what you will find within. I mean the picture of Christ blessing the children. Upon that charming picture,—could anything be more beautiful?—I wish you now to fix the eye of your heart. Look steadily at it till it is all photographed upon your soul.

Some mothers who had likely been blest by Christ themselves, bring their children to him, to have them blest too. For every Christian mother yearns most to bring her child to her own Saviour. But the disciples, perhaps thinking that the Master had enough of other work on hand, or that His touching them was of no use, step in, frown upon the mothers, and order them away. What a sight! On the one side, the scowling disciples, with anger in their tones and looks, putting out their hands to keep the children back from Christ; on the other side, the Saviour stretching out His arms to receive

them, and rebuking His disciples with sharp words. How much better is Jesus than the best of men ; how much kinder than the kindest ! When Jesus saw the behaviour of the disciples, "He was much displeased," and "took them (the children) up in his arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark x. 16).

I want to prove two things—

I. That Christ Loves Children.

II. That He Blesses them.

I. Christ Loves Children.—I know that you believe this in a way, but you do not know and feel it as you ought. Your heart would be quite drawn to Christ and melted if you only knew how He loves you. Two things here prove the greatness of His love ; these are—His anger, and His action. Of course, his words are also proofs of His love.

1. His anger proves the strength of His love to you. The text says, "He was much displeased." It is a very strong word this, none stronger in the language ; it means He was moved with indignation. I know not that Christ was ever more angry than He was that day. The anger of some people means very little, they are angry so often ; the smallest trifle puts them into a rage. Like the surface of the lake, their tempers are ruffled by every breath. Hugh Miller writes in *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, that his father, during six years, was never seen angry but once. Two drunken

sailors on board his boat were beating the boy, so that the blood, streamed from his wounds. The master, Hugh's father, rushed in, and, in his wrath, might soon have killed the drunkards on the spot had not his sick wife placed herself between them. Hugh Miller closes his account of the fray by saying, "There are, I believe, few things more formidable than the unwonted anger of a good-natured man." And what shall we say of the anger of Him who is love; and who, so far as we know, was never angry except with those hypocrites, the pharisees, and with His disciples forbidding the children to come unto Him? This is "the wrath of the Lamb." And He is angry, not with His foes, but with His friends, when they wished to shew Him kindness, and when he had very few friends on the earth. Why was the loving Saviour so angry that day?

Here is an excited crowd; it is a slave-market. A black mother, who has patiently borne years of wrong, has been sold, knocked down to the highest bidder. Rough men next tear away the little boy she holds in her hand. They mean to separate mother and child for life. Her eyes flash, her whole body quivers with excitement. She rises in wrath; rage supplies her with arms; like one inspired, she rushes upon armed men. They cut her with swords, and mock her vain efforts, yet with the strength of three or four men, she dashes past, and seizes her boy. Her terrible anger proves the greatness of her love for her darling boy; and

so the anger of Christ proves the depth of His love for children.

Again, in Matthew xviii. 6, our Saviour speaks about those who offend, that is, injure little children. He means those who put evil into their hearts, who tell them bad stories, or who lead them into evil courses. His words are full of burning anger ; they are so awful that they may well make our very flesh tremble. He says that it would have been good for such a bad man if he had never been born. He says that it would have been better for him had he been drowned like a dog ; better had a big stone been tied to his neck and he cast into the depths of the sea. All the fierceness of His anger is kindled against those who come between him and the children, or who do them any harm. He is their Friend and Guardian. Christ's anger is our first proof that He loves children. O Christ, Thou Lover of children, may we never provoke Thine anger, but may we ever be kept in Thy love.

2. We now take up our second proof, which is, you remember, that Christ's *action* shews His love to children. You know how a mother shews her love to her child ; and a mother's love is more like Christ's than any other human love. The little thing cannot understand her words ; but she takes it up in her arms, fondles and caresses it, lays her hands gently upon it, and speaks in soft low tones. The mother's heart lies in the mother's hand, which is warm with feeling. Thus the mother's loving thoughts reach the little mind

through the mother's touch ; and it is soothed, and pleased, and smiles. And so did Christ. I once heard a father say that a neighbour of his had no love for children. When asked the reason, he replied : " I have six children ; he has been often in my house, and I never saw him lay his hand on the head of one of them." Were you visiting a baby, I am sure that the first thing you would do, before you knew that you were doing it, would be to go up and touch it. This verse will seem to you one of the most beautiful in the Bible, if you think a little upon it. Often Christ touched men—it was a habit of His. He often touched lepers who had not felt a human hand upon them for years. He used to go very close to those He healed, and lay His warm hands upon them. But there was something quite remarkable about His touching the children. The mothers had modestly asked Him only to touch them ; but He did more than they had asked or thought. As when men fondle children, He took them up in His arms, and laid His hands upon them. The words are full of meaning, and eloquent. The touching was not hasty and soon over, but prolonged. He lingered over it, as if He did not wish to have done with it. And you may be sure that all our Saviour's looks and words added feeling to His touch. For there are many ways of touching ; it may be hard and cold, or it may be tender. I lately visited a very old man, who, like all old men, remembered best the scenes of his boyhood. He told me that he remembered nothing better than

the kindness of his aged minister. "He used to take me when a little boy between his knees," he said, "and lay his hand gently on my head ; and I feel the touch of his hand to this very day." The touch of that aged minister was so well remembered because it shewed so much affection. How full of love must the touch of Christ have been. In a house in our city there was once a discussion as to whether Christ ever smiled. Some were for holding that, according to an old tradition, He never smiled. A little girl broke in, and maintained that Christ did smile. When asked the reason, she said, "Well I am sure that when He bade the children come to Him, they would not have done so, unless He had smiled." The touch had all about it that could make it a perfect token of perfect love.

This love of Christ was shewn to very little children. It is very unusual and awkward for one to take big children, children who can walk, in his arms. Then the word Mark uses means babes at the breast. They were, then, babes and sucklings whom Christ took in His arms. No child is too young for the love of Christ to rest upon it. And Jesus loves children of every country, class, and colour. They were Jewish children He blessed that day ; but He is the Saviour of all, Jew and Gentile alike. Now there is no difference. A missionary reports a conversation he had with a quick-witted, black boy. "God loves you, my boy," said the missionary. "Ah ! no," replied the boy ; "God loves white man's child ; God no love black man's child.

Black man is poor, and weak, and knows nothing ; but white man has all the good things." The little fellow was wrong there. He did not know the Saviour's heart.

Can anything in the world be proved more plainly than this, that Jesus loves children ? His words prove it ; His *anger* proves it : His *action* proves it. Believe it, then, with thy heart.

" There's a Friend for little children
Above the bright blue sky ;
A friend that never changes,
Whose love will never die.
Unlike our friends by nature,
Who change with changing years,
This Friend is always worthy
The precious name He bears."

II. Jesus also Blesses Children.—"He took them up in His arms, . . . and blessed them." When one man blesses another, he says, "God bless you." The other day I passed in the street a poor woman carrying a pale-faced baby. I heard her say with much feeling, as she laid her hand gently on the coughing child, "God bless my ain dear wee sonnie." She could not give the blessing of health to the boy ; she could only ask God to give it. But Christ can do more than ask God to bless you, He can really bless you Himself. The Saviour in heaven can in many ways touch with His gracious hand children on earth. In answer to the prayers of Abraham giving his child to God, the

gracious Spirit made Isaac a child of the covenant. Thus Hannah in prayer gave back her child to the Lord; and little Samuel, like the child in Christ's arms, was blest by an act he could not then understand; for he was sanctified from the womb, and became for life the Lord's servant. In many ways we do not know, Jesus can reach and bless the youngest. But did He bless that sweet babe whose little life was so soon taken from us? Oh, yes! It is said in Deut. xxxiv. 5, that Moses died, "according to the word of the Lord." The Jews say these words mean, "at the mouth of the Lord," or "with a kiss from the mouth of the Lord." As a child at night receives its mother's kiss, and falls asleep, so God kissed Moses, and he died. And so the child falls asleep in Jesus. It lays its head on His gentle breast, receives His kiss, and falls asleep. Then the Saviour sends His angel to carry the young immortal from its mother's bosom to His own. For, as I read the other day in a country church-yard, "He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isa. xl. 11). This is balm for mourners over an infant's grave. This should reconcile us to the loss of "our own dear dead," who have shaken the pilgrim-dust of earth from off their little feet, and now walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. When our little boy, six months and a-half old, was taken from us, one of his kinsmen, who could not attend the funeral, sent us the following lines, which I give you, as they shew how Christ blesses our infant dead:—



THE DYING CHILD.

" Fear not to let him go
Down the darkening path of the dead ;
Just then, when to you it grew darkest, lo !
For him the last shadow had fled.
Out from earth's night, the Lamb's own light
Its fadeless splendour around him shed.

Fear not to let him go
~~The strange lone way~~ to the deep ;
For One is with him who well doth know
The way that He leadeth His sheep.
On His own arm the helpless lamb
The loving Shepherd delights to keep.

Fear not to let him go
By the broad dark river's strand ;
He has found that the waters have ceased to flow,
Where the priests with the ark still stand,
Till all the host in peace be crossed
To their lot in the pleasant land.

Fear not to lay him low
In the soft green lap of earth ;
A throng unnumbered, she keepeth so
Till the day of her own new birth,
When Zion's king " His own " shall bring
To His Father's house with songs of mirth.

Fear not to let him go
To God by whom he was given ;
The sense of the love that gave Christ will grow
In your hearts thus sorrow-riven.
And let this cheer, though absent here,
He is now with the Lord in Heaven."

Let me tell you now how the love of Christ blesses
children who are as old as you are. You have seen
the holy communion, when bread and wine are given

in the name of Christ to His disciples. The sacrament is a picture of our religion ; the whole gospel is in it. The cup in the Lord's Supper is called "the cup of blessing." In all nations the cup is a sign of enjoyment. Poets are always speaking about the cup of pleasure. As Christ at the communion puts a cup into our hands, so in the gospel He holds out a cup of blessing to our hearts, and we are to take it, and drink it, and praise God from whom all blessings flow. Let us see what are some of the blessings in this cup.

1. The first is *Pardon*. This cup, says Jesus, is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission or pardon of sin. You are sinners, and sin is your only curse. Until your sin is pardoned and taken away, you cannot have one real blessing. As He pardoned the dying thief, so He will pardon every sinner who appeals to Him. He begins to bless by pardoning.

2. The next blessing is what I may call *Provision*. I am still shewing you how the Lord's Supper explains my text. With the wine in the cup there is bread, and Christ says, "take, eat." There is blessing for all the future. You are weak, and for the journey of life you need bread, nourishment, strength. He gives you manna from heaven. In days of world-wide famine, our Joseph has corn for all. No one can tell what trials you may have in boyhood and girlhood, in manhood and womanhood, in old age, and in crossing the Jordan ; but one thing is certain, if you receive all the blessings Christ

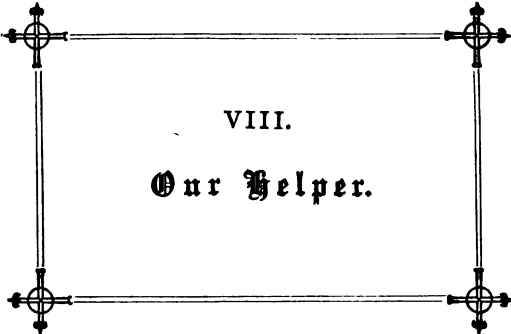
holds out to you, you will have provision for the whole journey of life.

3. You have also the blessing of *Friendship* with God. The religion of Jesus is not like a fast—it is only the devil's calumny that makes it so ; it is not a funeral feast, not garrison fare, not pauper's or prisoner's rations, not the bread and water of affliction ; but a royal wedding feast, given to those who are brought as God's friends into His banqueting-house, to whom He says, "Eat, O friends ; drink abundantly, O beloved." He who through Christ is blest with the love of God exclaims with David, "My cup runneth over."

These three are among the chief blessings Christ gives us, for they are set forth in the one great feast which He commanded His disciples to keep till He should come again. Sin curses not only the soul, but the whole man in body and soul, for time and for eternity ; and Jesus blesses man body and soul for time and eternity. His blessings are not all shut up in the channel of the soul, but, like the Nile in full flood, they overflow and cover the whole life of man. Jesus blesses men every way, everywhere, in everything. For instance, I well remember going to thank a man who, unasked, had sent me a contribution for mission work, which I thought must have been as much as his whole week's wage. His wife said again and again with tears, "Oh, what a blessing the gospel is when it comes into a family!" Drink, and anger, and poverty had made that home very wretched. But when the gospel entered in

its power, all these evils fled. Their home soon became clean and comfortable; all were well fed and well dressed; prosperous industry was filling their cup with all earthly blessings. On every wall, on every article of their furniture, on **their** happy faces I read these words, "And men shall be **blessed in Him.**" "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and **all these** things shall be added unto you." Then there are other blessings which eternity will open up, but never exhaust.

Be sure that you do not mistake Christ. You see that His own disciples sadly mistook Him. Don't judge Him wrongly; you may very easily do so, unless you take care. Your wrong thoughts about Him may make Him angry with you, as He was with His disciples that day. Think of Him, come to Him as the Saviour who loves and blesses children. Are you content to be untouched and unblessed by Him? He holds out to you His cup of blessing; but another cup is held out to you by your great enemy—the poisoned cup of sin. I have seen a true image of it in brass. Its outside was gilt; but hidden at the bottom within was a coiled-up serpent with outstretched fangs, all ready to shoot deadly poison into the unwary soul who put his lips to the brim. Between these two cups you stand; you must turn away from the one, and take the other. Oh, dash the devil's enchanted cup from you, and put Christ's cup of blessing to your lips, and drink deeply, saying with David, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord"! So let it be. Amen.



VIII.

Our Helper.





HOMER, the ancient Greek poet, was very fond of describing how the gods, touched with pity, hastened from heaven to rescue a favourite hero when he was sinking in the sea, or perishing in battle. The hero in his extremity, finding no help at all in man, lifts his eye and heart to heaven. His prayer is soon answered. In the unclouded sky he sees the all-radiant form of his god, who with the speed of thought reaches his side, infuses fresh hope into his heart, and fresh vigour into his body, and snatches him from the jaws of death. These beautiful heathen fables may illustrate our Christian faith. For all Christians are like the dying Stephen; they look up steadfastly into heaven, and behold Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ready to help them. The Bible is always telling us that we are most helpless beings, sinners ready to perish. But it also tells us that our case is not hopeless, because we have a Friend in heaven. "So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper" (Heb. xiii. 6). It will be our delightful task to study this verse in which the Lord Jesus Christ

stands forth as our only Helper. He is also a perfect Helper, because He is—

I. Able.

II. Willing.

III. Near.

IV. Known.

I. He is Able to help us.—A friend may be willing and near, but not able to help you. I have seen a mother bending over her dying boy. She was very willing to help. The feeling of her mother's heart was—Oh, that I could die instead of thee, my son! And she was near; she held his hand, and kissed his fevered brow. But as he entered the gates of death, she could not go one step with him, or give him a helping hand. I have seen a spot at the coast where a stranded sloop once turned over, and pinned down a poor sailor in the sand. He was able to speak, for only his limbs were underneath the sloop. His comrades rushed to the rescue, and strove hard to set him free; but the more they digged and tugged, the deeper down the man and sloop sank in the yielding sand. The tide was rising fast. The poor man covered his face with his handkerchief, while one of the sailors commended his soul to God in prayer; and death soon ended his pain. You see that our helper must have, first of all, power to give us all the help we need. Now the Bible glories in the strength of Jesus. In this epistle it is written (chap.

vii. 25) that He is able to save to the uttermost, seeing He ever liveth. Our help has been laid on One who is Almighty. He has the whole power of God. In reading the gospels, have you not often waited, and admired the cures of Jesus? With what infinite ease He wrought them! A look, a word, a touch, and lo!—quick as a flash of lightning—the blind received their sight, the lame leaped for joy, and the dead were brought back to life. It does one's heart good to think of such boundless power working such wonders without an effort. And, as you read in the eighth verse of this chapter, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Neither effort nor years can weaken His arm. Burdens cannot crush our Burden-bearer. Our heavenly Helper has all the power of Jehovah; so that, if you trust in Him you may boldly say, "The Lord is my Helper."

" Trust in the Lord, for ever trust,
And banish all your fears;
Strength in the Lord Jehovah dwells
Eternal as His years."

II. Jesus is as Willing as He is able to help us.—However able a friend may be, he will prove no helper of ours, unless he be also willing. Nothing in all the Bible is plainer than this, that Christ is willing to bless us. His Almighty arm is moved by a heart of infinite love. He is the All-mighty and the All-merciful. Follow Christ from the cradle to the cross, and from His grave to His heavenly throne, and does not every part of His history prove that He is willing to save

sinners? What is the meaning of His words, His deeds, His whole life? Was any one ever so gentle as He, so easy of approach, so ready to welcome, and bless all comers? This is a favourite point with all the writers of the Bible. They all desire to persuade our fearful hearts that Christ is always waiting to bless men. One who, after much doubting, had by grace believed, told me that his doubts all vanished when he grasped these words of Christ, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." He shewed me that nothing could be stronger than the words, "in no wise." They were the anchor of his soul, holding him fast amid all the tossings of conscience.

It is very strange that we doubt Christ's willingness after all He has said and done. You know very well that every true Christian would save you if He could. He is certainly willing, but he is not able. Now, can you imagine for one moment that Christ is less willing than he is? The Christian's desire for your salvation is just a drop from the swelling ocean of love in the heart of Christ. The reason why we doubt Christ's willingness lies here—Conscience makes us afraid of any one we have wronged. However kind your father may be, you cannot look him in the face when you have done wrong, even though you know that he has not found it out. Thus Adam and Eve hid themselves from God, before God had said a word to them about their sin. We are like the South Sea Islanders when visited by British ships. The approach of such power frightens

them; they fear that they will be punished for some evil they or their neighbours have done. They flee to the rocks and thickets; and all the tokens of goodwill the sailors' ingenuity can use often fail to win their confidence, and draw them forth from their dark lurking-places. So with words and signs of mercy God pursues sinful men flying from His grace; but our hearts are so full of dark suspicions, that it is very hard for us really to trust His love.

A little girl was lately at a meeting when the minister was proving Christ's willingness to save. When she went home, she opened her New Testament at the preacher's text. It was Matthew viii. 2, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." She began to scrape the leaf with her pen-knife. "What's that you're doing?" her mother asked. "I'm scraping out that word *if*," she said. "It was wrong in the leper to say *if*. He should have said, 'Lord, Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.'" The little girl's meaning was good; for on Christ's side there is no *if* in it. You may put your trust in Him without fear. He is able, and He is willing. His coming from heaven to earth proves His willingness, His rising from earth to heaven proves His power to save us.

III. He is also Near.—My friend may be both able and willing to help in my need, but not near; or he may be near, but not near enough; so that, good

friend though he is, he cannot be my helper. Let me give you the sad story of a poor widow I used to visit, whose house was on the bank of a canal. Looking out of her window one afternoon, she saw a bonnet floating on the water. "My heart gave a thud," she said; "it was my laddie's bonnet." Soon his dead body was laid dripping on the bed. Not long after that, one evening she heard a loud cry for help. She rushed forward, and saw her husband struggling in the canal. She was able and willing to aid; and near, very near. She was near enough to give him hope, but not near enough to give him help. He perished within an arm's length of his wife. Our Saviour is a very present help; He is not far from any one of us; He is near to all that call on Him. "Say not in thine heart," as you are very apt to say, "Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above)." The notion that Christ is far off lies like a nightmare upon many a soul. But every way He is near thee. He is not separated from you by priests and masses, as the Roman Catholics believe. Nor is He separated from you, as some Protestants seem to think, by years of doing the best you can. Between you and Him there stretches no mountain of difficulty through which you must painfully quarry your way before you can reach Him. Through the dark mountains, over the yawning abyss sin had made, He has opened up the highway of salvation. He is very near you both in space and in time. He is nearer you than your nearest neighbour, for He can touch your very soul, not merely by

His words, but directly : His naked finger touching your naked soul. And He is equally near you on any spot of the earth's surface. Should you be in India or Africa, should you be pacing the deck on the lonely sea, or traversing the plain beyond the abodes of men, you can send a prayer to the great Helper, and He can at once send you His grace. Take one instance. In the Gospel of John (chap. iv. 46-54), we read that a nobleman came from Capernaum to Christ at Cana, beseeching Him to go down to Capernaum and heal his son, who was at the point of death. Christ was then about twenty-five miles from the sick son ; but He said to the father, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." And at that very hour the fever left him. Christ darted healing power, like a ray of sunshine, across the country twenty-five miles to the fevered boy. And from His throne in heaven He can, with equal speed, dart healing power into any sin-sick soul sighing for His mercy. When Dr Cunningham was a-dying, a friend said to him, that though he was weak in mind and body, Christ was able both to take hold and keep hold of him. The doctor replied with great animation and energy, "Oh yes, at once,—at a stroke—at a dash—at a word."

And He is ever near. He is not like our earthly helpers, who are near to-day, and far away to-morrow, and whom death will by-and-by snatch from us. Our heavenly Helper will stand by us for ever. "For He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper."

He is able, He is willing, and He is near. Oh greatly blessed is he who has such a Helper.

IV. The Lord is also a Known Helper.—

A few years ago a sailor was selling in the streets of London a narrative of the wreck of a well-known ship. A gentleman stepped up to him, and said, "Do you know anything about the wreck of that ship?" "Yes," said the sailor, "for I was in it." "And what did you do in it?" He replied, "A baby was thrown out of the ship, and I picked him up." The gentleman's eyes filled as he said, "I was that baby." Up to that hour he had not seen or known the helper who had saved his life. A widow, to whom an unknown friend had sent money, told me that she greatly wished to know who he was. In the generosity of her gratitude, she felt as if she had been defrauded of the pleasure of thanking her benefactor. But the Christian well knows the name of his Helper. He is not ashamed to own His Lord. He glories in His love, and spreads His fame abroad.

There are many kinds of helpers; but the word in our text means a Helper who aids those who *cry*, or rather, shout aloud for him. It is a proverb, that "God helps those who help themselves;" but, in our salvation, God helps those who despair of helping themselves, and who, out of the depths in which they are sinking, cry to Him as their only hope. An American pastor writes that he once had in his flock a Red Indian, who

was an intelligent Christian. He used to describe his conversion by an illustration borrowed from his daily life : he was a hunter. "I was sinking in the bog ; I struggled to get out, but the more I struggled, I sank deeper and deeper. I thought I was lost. Then I gave the *death-yell*, and at once was safe in the arms of Jesus." Ah, when a man despairs of help from every other quarter, and cries to God out of the depths, like another Jonah, the Saviour's hand will soon lift him up, and set his feet upon the rock.

The Christian says, "The Lord is my Helper." Not only near, and known to be able and willing to help, but one who has helped me, and became my trusted Friend for time and eternity. "My Helper,"—not one among many helpers, but my one, only Helper. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. O Christ, be thou thus my Helper !

Our text is part of a letter to Christians who were terribly persecuted. Some had already died a martyr's death, while others had, for Christ's sake, suffered the spoiling of their goods. Their enemies were like tigers thirsting for more blood. He reminds them that they are on God's side, which must in the end be the winning side. He knows that if they have strong faith, they will not yield, as every one of them will boldly say, "The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." This truth should make every soldier of Christ a real hero, always ready, fearlessly to battle for

the right. It is this truth that has inspired the goodly company of the martyrs, confessors, and reformers. This faith makes men gentle as the lamb, and bold as the lion. It was said that the lion and the lamb lay down together in the heart of Elliott the missionary. This faith lifts the persecuted above the fear of death, of men, and of devils. It was this faith that gave John Knox the courage which led the Regent Morton, as he gazed on his coffin, to say, "There lies he who never feared the face of man." Having the Lord for his Helper, he so feared Him that he knew no other fear. It was this faith that gave Martin Luther his wonderful boldness. His friends besought him not to go to Worms, as all the power of the Emperor was ready to crush him. "I shall go," he replied, "even though there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the house-tops." Again they told him that he should not go to Leipzig, as he would there be in the power of his enemy, Duke George. But he replied, "If God called me to Leipzig, I would go there though it were to rain Duke Georges for nine whole days together." The secret of all his Christian heroism drops from his lips in such words as these: "I am a man of faith, and of eternity. My enemies know not what faith is. Christ will have no difficulty in defending His cause in my cause. My Christ lives and reigns, and I too shall live and reign with Him." Take the Lord as your Helper, and make it your care never to be on any side for which you dare not expect His help; and then you, too, may

become a Christian hero, and in the darkest days you may joyfully sing that grand old psalm—

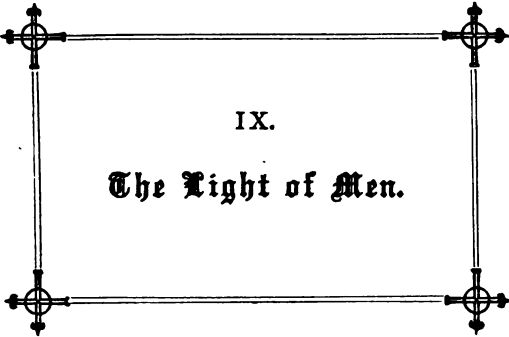
“ God is our refuge and our strength,
In straits a present aid ;
Therefore, although the earth remove
We will not be afraid :
Though hills amidst the seas be cast ;
Though waters roaring make,
And troubled be ; yea, though the hills
By swelling seas do shake.

.
God in the midst of her doth dwell ;
Nothing shall her remove :
The Lord to her an helper will,
And that right early, prove.

.
Our God, who is the Lord of Hosts,
Is still upon our side ;
The God of Jacob our refuge
For ever will abide.”







IX.

The Right of Men.





GERMAN preacher made for himself an interesting motto and seal. Inside a ring he placed two letters and three words. The letters were Alpha and Omega, and the three words were Light, Life, Love. The ring, without beginning or end, was a true type of the love of God, which is from eternity to eternity. The three words graven on that seal were also graven on the heart of the beloved disciple, John; and I wish now to take up two of them which are found in the fourth verse of the first chapter of his Gospel: "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." Light is the most beautiful and blessed thing in the world; it is also the first-born of heaven, and is thus a fit name for our Saviour. May He now fill our minds with His light, and our hearts with His love. I shall address you on—

- I. The Light; and,*
- II. Its Lovers.*

I. The Light.—Light always does two things:—

1. It chases away darkness ; and, 2. It gives life.

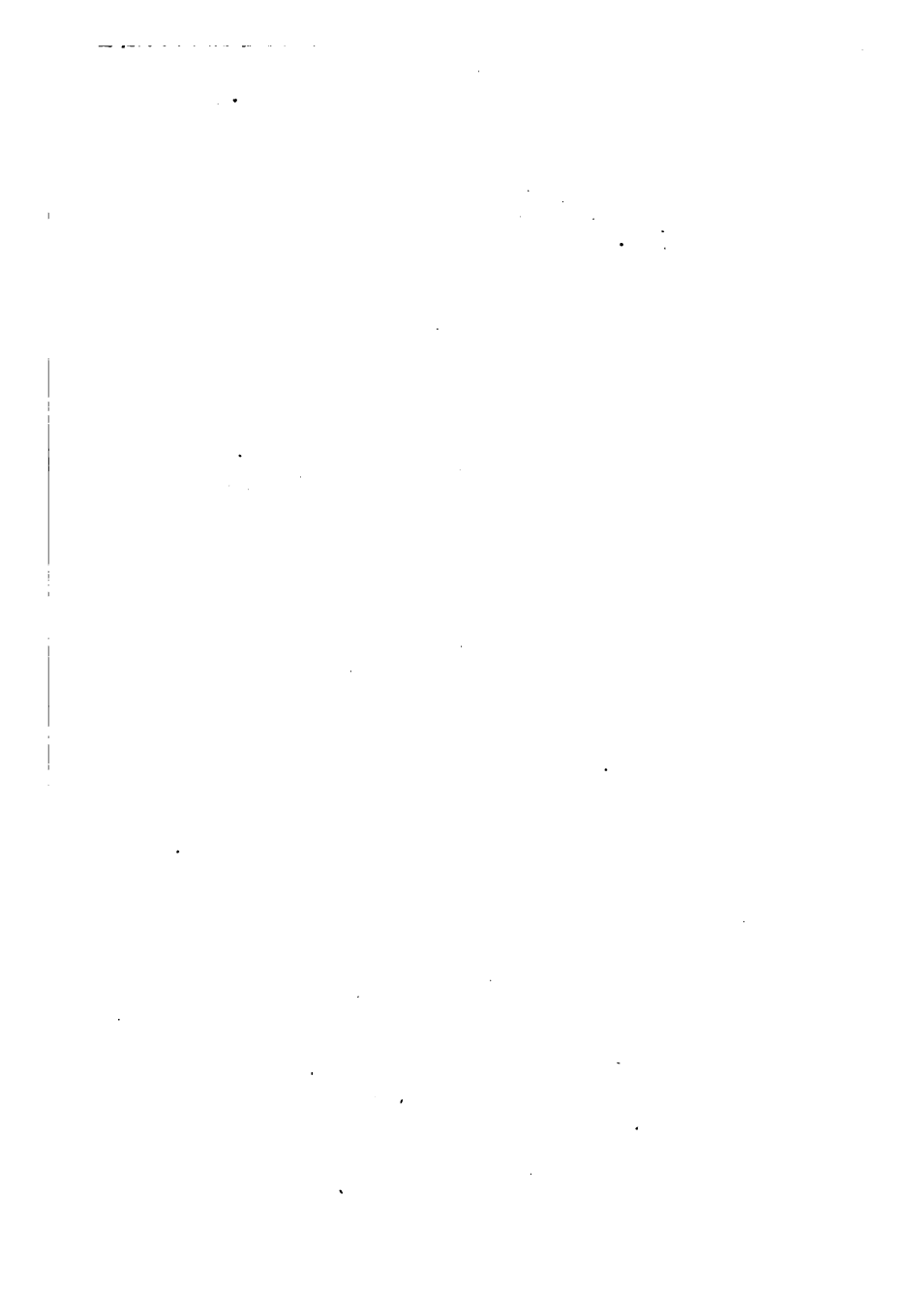
1. *Light chases away darkness.* How deep and chilly is the darkness sin has created around us ! It is like that darkness which was upon the deep when God said, " Let there be light." And without Christ, we sit in Egyptian darkness ; we are all in the dark about God, the soul, heaven, and many other things. " The light of nature," that is, the light we have without the Bible, cannot do much for us. Rowland Hill was once explaining this subject to some farm-servants. Suppose, he said, that on a dark winter's night you are startled by the noise of thieves among the poultry. You seize the lantern, and rush out. The lantern gives a few feeble rays ; but soon you stumble over the wheelbarrows, and hurt your bones. The light of nature is like the light of the lantern ; it is not enough for your needs. At a discussion in London, a working man was shewing what Christ had done to enlighten the world. An infidel next rose, and said it was all nonsense ; gas had done more to enlighten the world than the Bible. " Well, then, when you are dying," replied the Christian, " send for the gasman." The laugh was turned against the scoffer. No man ever had more of the light of nature, or made a better use of it, than Socrates of Athens ; yet on his death-bed he said to his scholars, " I hope to go hence to good men ; but of this I am not very confident, nor doth it become any wise man to be positive that so it will be. I must now die, and

you shall live ; but which of us is in the better state, the living or the dead, God only knows." A man of science, who had not thought much about the Light of men, was asked on his death-bed, how he felt. "I feel," he said, "just like a poor sheep, carried down a cold, dark river." I was called lately to visit a poor dying woman in the Infirmary. I had never seen her before, and I asked why she had sent for me. "Oh," she said in a tone that might have melted a heart of stone, "the doctor says I'm deein' ; an' I ken I'm no ready. I hae been very careless. Its dark, dark, awfu' dark, an' I dinna ken the richt road. Oh, ye maun tell me it quick !" It was the shadow of the second death, rather than of the first, that frightened her. You see that the learned and the unlearned, who have not Christ's light, meet together in that thick darkness which destroys all distinctions. But Christ "hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel."

I cannot tell you what light is, but I can tell you what it does. It destroys darkness even at a distance ; it is that by which I see things as they are ; it turns night into day. "What think you of Christ?" was the question once put to a Brahmin convert. "This is what I think," he replied : "It is said in our sacred writings that one night the full moon shone out in all her splendour, the stars were dazzling in their brilliancy, and every mountain was in a blaze ; and all combined their splendour to turn night into day. But all was in vain ; it was night still until the sun arose. I know

Christ to be that sun. Until He rose in my heart, nothing else could ever dispel the darkness that reigned in it ; but He has arisen, and now the blackness and mists are gone, and I can clearly see that heavenly country which, through faith in Him alone, shall one day be my glorious inheritance."

2. *Light gives Life.* Darkness and death, light and life, always go together. At the creation, light was made first, because nothing could live without it. Indeed our text tells us that light and life are the same. Many brave explorers have spent a whole winter within the Arctic Circle. The most famous of them were manly Christians, whose names have been given to the regions they discovered. In that land of mystery they found nothing more wonderful than the difference between summer and winter. Some of them lived for nearly five months without one ray of sunshine. Being beyond the limit of sun-light, they were also beyond the limit of life. Outside the ship they saw no living thing except now and then a starving white bear. Even their Eskimo dogs died of a disease caused by the darkness. "Light, light, more light," was the prayer of the desponding sailors. Light came at last, and they bathed themselves in the golden sunshine, as in an ocean of perfumed water. They were intoxicated with the light. In such a mood they could easily have joined the ancient Persians and Druids in worshipping the sun as "the source of all being," and "the life of everything." They had then a nightless day ; the sun never set for months.





AN ARCTIC SPRING.

Hunting parties clambered over the glaciers and icebergs at the coast. Lo, what a scene ! Dr Hayes found amid gigantic glaciers " a sparkling lake in a charming valley, which shone like a diamond in a setting of emerald." On every side were willows, and flowering birches, and graceful ferns, and violet-tinted flowerbeds, and sweet-smelling angelica. Beautiful animals were sporting about ; and snow-birds, nestling in the warm sunshine, filled the air with their music. That spot well deserved the spring-like name of Greenland, though, a few weeks before, it had better deserved the name old English sailors gave it, the Land of Desolation. The grass was growing even under the snow. The sun darted down his life-giving rays, and stirred the sleeping roots. Thus in the far north, peas grow three inches in twenty-four hours, and hay is made on ice-fields a month after the snow has melted. There you may almost hear and see the grass growing. God's marvellous light calls forth all these wonders. It revives men ready to perish. When it withdraws, death reigns ; and its return changes the icy desolation into a paradise. It is light that makes the northern spring as life from the dead to all nature. The life-giving power of light is quite as great among us as in the Arctic regions, but it is not so apparent. Shut out a flower from light, and it droops and dies. They have the best health, as a rule, who live most in the pure golden sunshine. I saw a house advertised the other day, and it was added, " situated on the sunny-side of the hill."

Southey, the poet, had a little palsied sister, on whom many a cure had been tried in vain. At last an old woman advised them to keep her as much as possible in the sun's rays. The boys, as the poet tells, took her out in the summer days, and carried round her little chair, so as to keep her always in the warm sunshine. One day she started to her feet, and joined in their game, and from that time was quite well. The genial light gave her life; the sun had healing for her in his wings. Light is thus the mightiest, busiest, kindest force in the world; and is, therefore, a favourite image of Christ, the Light of men. But it is not a perfect image, for the light of day does not create life: it only wakens up, and strengthens the life that already exists. But Christ does far more than that. For "all things were made by Him" (ver. 3). He is the Light of light, the eternal Light. The sun itself owes its light to Him. "In Him was life," original, uncreated life. He is truly what the sun has been called, "the source of all life and light." As this green earth lives in the life of the sun, so we live in Him. He gives life to dead souls, and then cherishes the life He has created. This is the reason why He is called the Life and the Light of men. We shall now turn to—

II. The Lovers of the Light.—We should all be children of light; that is, we should love it, and hate the darkness. They are lovers of the light who *receive* it, *use* it, and *spread* it.

1. Receive it, then. The light shines all around ; yet John is saddened and surprised that many do not comprehend it (ver. 5), that is, they do not receive it, or take it in. What a fund of life is in the sun ! how boundless its bounty ! Even heaven is too narrow for its rays, and it pours its blessings over heaven down upon earth. It is the very nature of the sun to give gifts to men ; and, with all its giving, it is as full as ever. Then its gifts are perfectly free to all who will take them. The pure light does not scorn to visit the foulest places ; it enters the garret as readily as the palace ; it falls on Lazarus' sores as kindly as on Cæsar's face ; it even "kisses carrion" as freely as it sparkles in the dewdrop. And it is the same in all ages. It is as fresh and abundant to-day as when Adam first gazed upon it in Eden. In all these points the love of God in Christ is like the light of day ; yet John's lament is, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (ver. 11). Your soul should turn and open to the Light of men, as every green thing turns and opens itself to the light of heaven. A geologist found in a cave myriads of sprigs of moss, which had been turned into stone ages ago. He noticed that every sprig had been faithful in death to the ruling law of its life ; for, like the living moss in the cave, it still pointed to the free air and the light. When a boy, I puzzled myself to find out how potatoes in an underground house could shoot their sprouts so far up the wall. I noticed that the sprouts were all

growing towards a little hole in the roof, through which the life-giving light came. If flower-pots in your windows are not moved for a week or two, they all grow to the side on which there is most light. These flowers and sprouts have good *inclinations*; they all bend unto the light. The living soul likewise bends towards the Light of men. All living things cry, each in its own way, "Hail, holy light;" they are all lovers of the sun.

It has been observed that in winter, when the light is scarce, the birds make the most of what light is left them. They sit in rows on the hill-tops at sunset, and at sunrise they are on the hill-tops facing the east, that they may enjoy the light as early and as late as possible. The timid birds that in summer hide in the heart of trees, usually perch then on the topmost branches. The birds, like the flowers, are lovers of the light. And so the Christian soul feels drawn to those places where the true light shines most abundantly.

Some English miners were lately shut up in a mine. Their comrades dug with a will, and after three days got within hearing distance. "What do you want first?" they cried. The prisoners made answer, "We want everything, but light before all things." Like these prisoners of hope, we need light before all things; and one would expect that all would receive and rejoice in the light the moment it comes to them. In the Life of the Rev. Josiah Henson (the hero of Uncle Tom's Cabin), we read that he lived as a boy in gross darkness. When he was eighteen years old, he had not been in a church, nor seen a Bible, nor

heard a sermon. The first sermon he heard taught him the simple facts about the life and death of Christ. His soul was stirred, and he received Christ on the spot ; and he has lived for seventy years as a lover of the light. His receiving the light at once with joy was most reasonable—just what should be in every case. Every heart should receive the light, just as the eye receives the sunshine. Father of light, we thank Thee that Thou givest *sight* as well as light to Thy children. Forbid that the God of this world should blind our minds. Plant eyes in our souls, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may shine unto us.

2. *Use* the light you receive. The apostle often describes a holy life as “walking in the light.” The light is not only in the disciple as a new life, but it is also around him as a new world, in which he lives and moves and has his being. When you walk at midday, the light is around you always, and touches you on every side. So you should walk in Christ’s light, never going out of it into the neighbouring darkness. About forty years ago, when the Young Men’s Christian Association at Paris was first formed, a stranger was often noticed at their meetings. He always came in after the meeting began, and left before it closed. They wondered who that mysterious man was, and one of them resolved to find out. One day he put himself in the stranger’s way, and asked him to join their association. “Well, I will tell you who I am,” he replied ; “I am a government detective.” (The Government was afraid of conspirators,

and had spies watching every meeting in Paris.) "I know all about every one of your members. I know everything you do by day and by night. There is not a company of young men like you in Paris. I have told the government that your behaviour is faultless, and that you are a credit to the country." That was walking in the light.

Some one has said divine light is not moon-light to sleep by, but sunlight to work by. David says, "Thy word is a light unto my feet, and a lamp unto my path." It is like the miner's lamp which guides him through the darkness to the work he has to do. And when you walk, your whole body moves together, and moves easily; and thus your soul, filled with the love of Christ, should move in the path of His commandments. And you should walk with joy. Looking at a book about Switzerland the other day, the picture on the first page interested me. It represents the villagers, on the return of spring, leading forth their flocks to the mountains. That is one of the greatest events of the year with them. The peasant and his cattle have lived together during winter, and they rejoice together as they go forth to the green pastures. Thus Malachi, looking forward to the coming Saviour, says, "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall;" that is, as calves which, after confinement in the stall, are led forth to the fresh pastures, and rejoice in liberty and plenty. The quiet

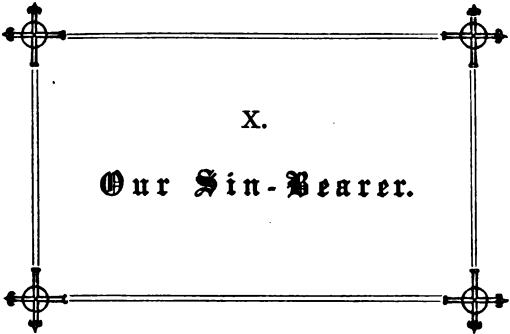
round of the simple life of Jewish herdsmen gave them no happier illustration of joyous and prosperous activity.

3. They who receive and use, also *spread* the light. How grand are the opening verses of John's Gospel! They are like a cluster of stars; almost every verse is a shining proof that Jesus is very God. But joy and sorrow are mingled in his words—joy that the light has come, and sorrow that so many will not receive it. He writes these truths in tears. Like one broken-hearted, he says, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (ver. 5), "The world knew Him not" (ver. 10), "His own received Him not" (ver. 11). It seems to Him a strange and terrible thing that men love darkness rather than the light. He cannot endure the dreadful wrong done to his Master; it is the great sorrow of his life. He wrote his Gospel to spread the light among men. If you love the light, you will feel and act like John. It will seem to you the saddest thing on earth that so many reject such a Saviour as Jesus; and you will pray that they may do so no longer. Your love of the light will make you like the light, which is the most gentle, generous, and spreading thing in the world. How gentle! It goes through glass without breaking it, and millions of its particles fill the eye without harming it. And how generous and spreading! It is ever giving to others without return, and it spreads through the gulfs of space millions of miles every minute. The lover of light would, if he

could, make the light spread with equal swiftness among all the children of darkness.

“ Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high—
Can we to men benighted,
The Lamp of Life deny ?
Salvation, oh, salvation !
The glorious sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name.”





X.

Our Sin-Bearer.





MUNICH, the capital of Bavaria, is famed for its big statues. Six persons can sit comfortably inside the head of a brazen lion there. But a still more gigantic statue was set up lately in a neighbouring village. The gate was too strait for it, and they had to make an opening in the wall before they could fetch it to its pedestal. Planted on a little knoll, it fills the eye of every traveller who enters the village ; and it dwarfs all who stand near it. It is the statue of our Saviour. The New Testament is like that German village ; the moment you enter it, there rises up before you the overshadowing image of Jesus Christ, "who," as Peter tells us in our text, "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. ii. 24). Your soul should be a temple in which the suffering Saviour has as large a place as He has in the Bible. An Edinburgh professor once said to his medical students, "Christ is the Head of our profession. It is

well that the statues of Hippocrates and Aesculapius (two famous old doctors) should stand outside our College of Physicians, but the living image of Christ should be enshrined in our hearts."

Our text falls of itself into four parts—

I. Who Suffered.

II. What He Suffered.

III. Where He Suffered.

IV. Why He Suffered.

I. Who Suffered.—Look at vers. 21 and 22, "Christ also suffered for us, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." This greatest of sufferers was both God and man; and He was sinless. He did no sin whatever, neither was guile found in His mouth after the strictest search. His worst enemies found no fault in Him; and, after eighteen centuries, nobody has laid his finger upon one stain in His character. Though He suffered for sins, He had no sins of His own to suffer for; He is the only sinless one the world has ever seen.

"Who His own self." A little girl brought me half-a-sovereign for missions. "Is all this from yourself?" I asked. Pointing to her heart, she said, "Yes, it is all from my own very self." So Peter's words mean, Christ did bear our sins really and truly; He bore them all alone; He had no rival, or partner, or substitute. When

the Queen travels, the newspapers sometimes tell us that Mr So-and-so, the superintendent of the line, drove the engine himself. The word *himself* shews that he did then in person what he usually does by the hand of his servants. Aaron in a way bare the sins of the people; but he did not bare them his own self in his own body: he laid them upon the lamb that was slain at the temple. But, unlike Aaron, Christ bears our sins "His own self in His own body." Who could offer to help Him? Who could share the awful load? Abraham, Moses, the disciples, the angels, the arch-angels? No; the awful burden would have crushed them in a moment. Of the people there was none with Him in His sufferings; He was alone. Never forget that you owe every part of your salvation to Christ. For your motto take "*Jesus only*." You will then have the same spirit of faith as a poor Irish Roman Catholic, who had been won by his Christian master, and whom I received into the church. I cannot tell you how greatly his racy conversation delighted me. He wound it up by saying, "Your Reverence, I have studied and contemplated the whole subject, and I see that if the Lord Jesus takes us on hand Himself in the matter of the soul's salvation, He won't need the priest, and the pope, and the Virgin, and all their manœuvrings to help Him out with the work. Sure and I'm thinking He is well able to do all the work Himself."

II. What He Suffered.—He "bare our sins."

He suffered as our Burden-bearer, our Sin-bearer. Suppose a child staggering under a heavy burden. A strong man comes forward, and, full of pity for the poor child, takes the burden and puts it on his own shoulders. In some such way Christ takes up our burden of sins, which would else have crushed us to death. But how does Christ bear our sins? He bears them by sympathy. A good mother once heard that her only son had done a deed of shame. The evil news caused her intense agony, her hair soon grew gray, health and joy forsook her, and soon she was brought down in sorrow to the grave. She bore her son's sin by sympathy. It caused her such grief, because she was so near him, and loved him so fondly. If one sin, or rather that small part of one sin we can know on earth, be such an awful burden, what must it have been to bear the sins of us all? What bounds can be set to "the unknown agonies" of Christ, who has made Himself one with us sinners? Let Gethsemane and its bloody sweat, let the cross and its pains explain these words, "Who bare our sins."

Christ also bare our sins by sacrifice and substitution, as well as by sympathy. Substitution is a big word, but you can easily understand it. One day I was sitting beside a London omnibus-driver, who was a very ignorant man. He seemed to know about nothing but his horses, and the streets along which he was driving. He complained bitterly that he had to drive every day in the year, Saturday and Sunday; and that, while his

horses got a holiday once in six weeks, he could not get one holiday in the year unless he provided a substitute at his own expense. That ignorant man knew perfectly what a substitute was. It was one to take his place, and act in his room and stead. Jesus Christ is our Substitute, for He bore our sins for our sake, and in our stead. The whole Bible is filled with this truth, and the names of Jesus help us to understand it. He is "the Lamb of God," upon whom the Lord hath laid the iniquities of us all. The Jew laid his hand upon the head of the lamb, and confessed his sins. The Lamb then in a type had the burden of the Jew's sins laid upon it, and bare them by being offered as a sacrifice. And thus, as the hymn says—

" My faith would lay its hand
On that blest head of Thine,
While as a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And trusts its guilt was there."

Jesus is also our Redeemer, who gave His life a ransom for us. We could pay nothing, but He paid the redemption-price, that we might go free. Again, Jesus is our Advocate and Intercessor, who takes up our case, and manages it for us. He burdens Himself with all our needs. He is also our Surety, who took our debts upon Him. Again, He is our One High Priest. The High Priest of old acted for sinners, and

did all he could for them. All these sweet and common names of Jesus shew us that His death is the grand fact which brings hope and peace to the trembling sinner, and conquers his heart. Dr Duncan was once asked to say a word at the close of a prayer-meeting. He rose, and said, "I have never heard the gospel better put than by a poor negro woman—'Me die or He die; He die, me no die.'" The most popular hymns in the world are those which state most simply and fully that Christ bare our sins. In the biographies of learned men, we find that on their death-beds they just came back to this—that they were sinners, and that Christ died for them. A Sabbath-school child could easily understand all the words in which they confess their faith. When Dr Guthrie was asked on his death-bed what hymn he would like best, his reply was, "Just give me a bairn's hymn." A friend was reading the life of Sir David Brewster, when his little daughter, ten years of age, lay a-dying. The dying words of the two were so very much alike, that it seemed as if the great philosopher were imitating the little child. In almost the very same words the two declared their faith in "the common salvation."

It is the love of the dying Saviour that breaks hard hearts. Christ suffered all this, and from love to me—ah, that melts the sinner's soul! For Christ did not die because He could not help it; but He died out of pure love to us sinners who had no love for Him. He chose to die that we might live; and thus His death

on the cross shews us, as nothing else does, His boundless love for us. Oh, how much the Saviour has done for us! Say, could He have done more?

What are you to give Him for His love to you? You are to give Him first of all your sins—you may surely give Him them without regret—and He will give you back His salvation. What an exchange! what a bargain! In an old book, Jerome, one of the fathers of the church, is supposed thus to address the child Jesus:—

“I must give Thee something, sweet child, I will give Thee all my gold.”

Jesus—“Heaven and earth are mine; I have need of nothing, give thy gold to the poor, and I will accept it as given to me.”

Jerome—“I will do this willingly, beloved Jesu; but I must also give Thee something for Thyself, or I shall die of sorrow.”

Jesus—“Since thou art so generous, I will tell thee what thou shalt bestow on Me. Give Me thy sins, thy evil conscience, and thy condemnation.”

Jerome—“What wilt Thou do with them, Jesus?”

Jesus—“I will take them on My shoulders. It shall be My glorious work to carry thy sins, to quiet thy conscience, and to blot out thy condemnation.”

May we all do as Jerome did. He began to weep, saying, “Ah, child, sweet child, how hast Thou touched my soul! I thought that Thou wouldest have something from me that is good, but no, Thou wilt have

everything that is bad. Take, then, what is mine, and give me what is Thine ; so am I helped unto life eternal."

We now know *who* suffered, and *what* He suffered ; let us also ponder—

III. Where He Suffered.—"In His own body on the tree." He was not like the Jewish High Priest, who bore sins in the body of the bull or goat. It was not in appearance that He suffered ; nor was it only in His Spirit or His feelings ; but it was also in His own body. What pen or tongue can tell the pains of His body. All the worst of bodily pains in their worst forms were united on the cross. His sacred brow was wounded by the thorns ; His sacred side was pierced by the spear ; His hands and feet were torn by the nails ; His lips were parched with raging thirst ; the fierce sun beat upon Him ; and His whole body was cramped by its position on the cross. For He was really a man ; and for us men, and our salvation, He suffered in the flesh. But the text does not run—who bare our sins by or upon His body only, but *in* His body ; He bore them also in His soul. For Isaiah says, "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" ; and, "He poured out His soul unto death ;" and Jesus said Himself, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." An old writer has truly said, "the pain of His body was the body of His pain, but the pain of His soul was the soul of His pain." He suffered in body and soul, that He might

redeem us in body and soul. He gave Himself, His whole self, for us ; and you must give nothing less than your whole self to Him.

To the question, Where ? the full answer is, In His body ; and so in the soul that dwelt in His body ; and also on the tree. There are three great trees of the Bible, towering above all other trees, as the cedars of Lebanon tower above the humble shrubs. These are the tree of life in Eden, the tree of death on Calvary, and the tree of life in heaven. The first is the tree for the sinless, the second is the tree for the sinful, and the third is the tree for the saved in glory. We are neither sinless nor saints in glory, and therefore *the* tree for us is the tree on Calvary. Notice that Peter calls it simply the tree. A family have been promised a Christmas-tree by a friend. All their talk for weeks beforehand is about the tree, just as if there were no other tree in the world for them. One day a cart with a nodding fir-tree is seen approaching the house. They rush in and shout, "Oh, mother, the tree has come !" And so the apostle says, "the tree." No Christian can mistake it. It is the tree of trees, the prince of trees for us.

I think that the apostle also means in this way to fix down the death of Christ as a fact. He loves to remind himself and them, that there was a real tree on which Christ had really died for their sins, in open day, in face of the world. He likes to get to the solid fact, and to feel that there can be no doubt about it. I daresay he

also wishes to teach them that Christ's was a death of shame, as well as of pain; for, then as now, there was no greater disgrace than to be hanged on a tree.

You should survey the wondrous tree on which the Prince of glory died for our sins. A traveller was once standing in a German cathedral before a picture of the taking of Christ down from the cross. He stood as if spell-bound till night came, and they were shutting up the church. He seemed to hear a voice from the canvas, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." A man touched him on the arm, and told him it was time to leave the church. "I must wait," the traveller said, "till they take him down." Like that traveller, fix your soul's eye upon Christ lifted up on the cross, till it all becomes real to you. Then your trembling soul will be drawn unto Him, as the trembling needle turns to the pole. Your soul will tremble with a holy fear of the sins which nailed Him to the tree, and tremble also with joyful gratitude for the salvation He died to purchase, and ever lives to bestow. We must not close till we know well—

IV. Why the Saviour Suffered.—There must have been a good reason why Christ endured these awful sufferings. It was, "that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." Every Christian is like Christ. He was born to die for our sins; and we are born again to die to sin. Our death to sin is like His

death for sin ; our new life is like His new life when He rose from the grave. Until we have died to sin, we have not begun really to live. We live truly only when we live together with Him. A fellow-student, who was a Jew by birth, once gave me the story of his life. By reading the New Testament he was convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised to his fathers.. He was converted, forsook the synagogue, and was baptised. His parents were shocked, legally disowned and disinherited him, held him as a dead man, and went the length of having a form of burial, and a funeral service over what passed as his coffin. By his conversion he became dead to Judaism, and alive unto Christianity. He was dead to Judaism every way : in law, in love, in life. Dead in law, for he had lost all his lawful rights as a Jew and the son of a Jew, and Judaism could no longer claim him as its own ; he was dead also in love, for his affections had entirely changed, and their love for him was also clean gone ; he was dead also in life, for Judaism was as a dead thing to him, and he to Judaism. What cared he for their phylacteries, and new moons, and carnal ordinances. He gloried only in the cross of Christ, by which Judaism was crucified unto him, and he unto Judaism. But he was alive unto Christianity, for he had devoted himself to the work of Christ. On the day of his conversion he died as a Jew, and began to live as a Christian. His case should help you to understand my text. Faith in Christ slays the old sinful life, and plants a new righteous

life in its place. "The tree" is the burying-place of the old life, and the birth-place of the new. Christ's cross is the landing-place of the sinner, and the starting-point of the Christian. Christ died that we might become dead to sins; not merely to this or that sin, but to all sins together. He is called Jesus, because He saves His people from their sins; from the guilt of them, and from the power of them. When you were three or four years old, you were what your little brother and sister of that age are now. Childish toys were your whole world, your chief joy. But now you are dead to them; you do not care in the least for them; other things have taken their place. The shells you gathered so eagerly on the shore have all been thrown away now. Christ wishes us to become dead to sins in the same way. And He wishes us to live unto righteousness, that is, to devote our lives to holy things; just as the merchant is alive—all alive, as men say—in the making of money; just as the man of pleasure is alive unto his sports; just as the explorer throws his whole heart and soul into his discoveries. Christ on the cross has all this power over men. I shall prove it by one case. You have heard of the Moravians, who are among the greatest missionaries in the world. Their church was founded by a nobleman named Count Zinzendorf. He tells that when he was about twenty years of age, he stood one day before a painting of Christ on the cross. All he knew about the Saviour came rushing into his mind. Underneath the picture he read these words, "This I did for thee, what doest thou

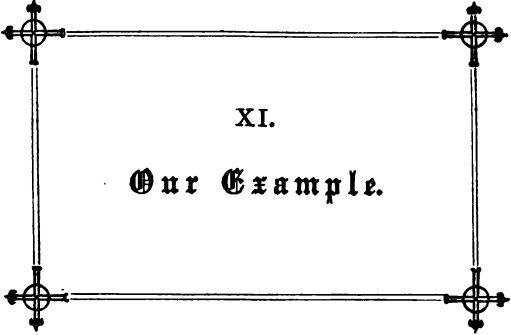
for me?" The question kept ringing in his soul; he became alive unto righteousness, and did great good before he died. Go thou and do likewise.

"O Christ! what burdens bowed Thy head!
Our load was laid on Thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
Didst bear all ill for me.
A victim led, Thy blood was shed,
Now there's no load for me.

For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died in Thee;
Thou'rt risen, my bands are all untied,
And now Thou livest in me.
When purified, made white, and tried,
Thy glory then for me."







XI.

Our Example.





CON the streets you often see huge bills advertising goods, or the sailing of ships, or proclamations by the magistrates. These bills usually have a name, and a few lines in large letters, while all the other words are in small type. The Bible is heaven's proclamation of mercy, God's advertisement to all whom it may concern, offering grace and glory without money, and without price. In it one name is above every name—the name of Jesus, which is found in one shape or other, no less than 993 times in the New Testament. Then some of its declarations are as if printed in the largest type, to draw the eyes of all men to them. They have more space by far than is given to any other truths. Of all the lessons God gives us, none take up more room than these two—

CHRIST IS OUR SIN-BEARER.

CHRIST IS OUR EXAMPLE.

Or we may put them into three lines—

CHRIST FOR US.

CHRIST IN US.

CHRIST BEFORE US.

In God's advertisement to men, these lessons have been written so boldly, that he who runneth may read them at a glance.

Our last subject was *Christ our Sin-bearer*, or Christ for us, and Christ in us. We saw that Christ died for us, that He might live in us, and so make us live unto righteousness. To-day we are to think about Christ as our Example, or Christ before us. Turn for our text to 1 Peter ii. 21, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." Our last text and this were both uttered at one breath, so very closely are they united. The two subjects are indeed twins. For to live unto righteousness, is just to take Christ as our example, and follow His steps. Let us now secretly beseech God's Holy Spirit to aid us; and let us do our very best to get into the heart of the lesson, and then to get the lesson into our own hearts. We shall study Christ's Example—

I. As a Whole.

II. In its Parts.

The whole, and its parts; these are our divisions.

I. Christ's Example as a Whole.—"For even hereunto were ye called," the apostle tells them. They

were called to be travellers in the royal road, along which their Saviour had Himself walked, leaving His shining footsteps to guide them. It is not enough to follow Christians, however famous. You are to follow them, only in so far as they follow Christ. The best of men are but men at the best; and their very best is never perfectly good. Hence you must follow only the one perfect man the world has ever seen, the man Christ Jesus. The eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews contains the roll of the Old Testament heroes; but the apostle bids them run the Christian race, not by looking unto Abel, or Abraham, or Moses, or Daniel, but by "looking unto Jesus." Yet, I hope you love to read the lives of great Christians; for no books except the Bible are more likely to interest and rouse you. One day Cæsar's general found him weeping in his tent in Gaul. The general wondered greatly; for Cæsar had often slaughtered thousands, and seen thousands of his own soldiers slain, without shedding a tear. "Why weepest thou, O Cæsar?" the general asked. "I weep," said Cæsar, "because I read in this page (pointing to a volume on the table) that Alexander the Great had conquered the world before he had reached my age, and I have yet done nothing worthy of fame." Cæsar there and then vowed that he would take Alexander for his example, and follow his steps. And he did it, and became the greatest soldier of his day. And so the life of a good soldier of Jesus Christ should make you weep that you have

done so little, and should fire you with the desire to do more. Still Christ Himself is your only perfect example, and your life should be an imitation of Him. A convert in the South Sea Islands is called "a Jesus-man," and the Germans call a Christian a Christ, "Ein Christ." These names shew you the full meaning of my text.

The word example here is something to be written under, that is, a drawing copy such as is set before you by your drawing-master, or a line at the head of your copy-book. You remember when you began writing, you tried to copy the beautiful line of copperplate at the top. But what sad bungling! what straggling, and blotted letters! Your companions laughed at your blunders, and you could not help laughing with them. But you turned over a new leaf, and said, "Now, I'll try to do better this time." And you did better, till, by daily practice, you came, bit by bit, to be a very good writer. Now, you are to copy Christ's example in the same way, always seeking grace to help you. You must make it the work of your life to be like Christ.

You are also to "follow His steps," the footprints He made on earth, which have been preserved for us in the pages of the gospel. Along with some friends, I once visited one of the great glaciers, or ice-seas, of the Tyrol. We tramped over a desert of snow for nine hours, during which we did not see a beast, or a bird, or a single green thing. We saw only white and glistening snow: no fuller on earth could have produced whiteness like it. The snow concealed many deep, dark-green gaps; but

we were all tied to our three guides with strong ropes, so that if any one fell into a gap, he could not fall far. Our chief guide, an old man, who knew the way thoroughly, went first. His keen, practised eye at once saw whether the newly-fallen snow bridged over a crack in the ice. We all followed him, not in a vague, general way, but we followed him closely; we followed *his very steps*. We watched his deep footprints in the snow, and planted our feet in them, step by step. You are to follow Christ in that way; the text is, "follow His steps." To have ventured upon that snowy field without a trusty guide would have been death. For in the village church-yard we saw the grave of an Englishman who would not be bound to his guide on the glacier. He had stepped on a frail snow-bridge, which gave way, and he was killed. Be warned. Over life's slippery path keep close to your heavenly guide, "drawn with cords of a man, with bands of love." You are to take Christ's example as a rich legacy He has left you. Follow him always, no matter with whom you may have to part company. Boston told a congregation of Ettrick shepherds that he had seen a dog following two men, but he could not tell which of the two was its master, till the two parted at the cross-roads. And so, he said, Christ's followers will keep by Him in all things in which He and the world take different roads. "Be sure you follow Christ; that is the best life," such was the advice a dying girl lately gave to her brothers when she took farewell of them.

It is now time to consider—

II. Christ's Example in its Parts.—That part of it which the text speaks of is suffering, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example." The apostle was writing to poor slaves; and the most of their masters were shocking monsters of cruelty and vice. The Christian slaves were often buffeted, even when they did well; and it was very hard to bear it. Even the worm will turn upon the cart-wheel that crushes it to death, and no wonder that the slave's burning sense of wrong sometimes burst out in angry words. He wishes them to be patient and forgiving, that their masters, seeing their Christ-like spirit, might be won over to the faith. He bids them remember that Christ was a great sufferer for them, an innocent sufferer too, and a patient sufferer. When He suffered He threatened not, but kept back the crowding legions of angels that were ready at a word to overwhelm His foes. And by all Christ has suffered for them, He beseeches them to suffer for Christ, and like Christ. Some little people are great sufferers; it would melt any heart to see them: and if great trials should come to you, may you bear them as the great Sufferer, when He prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done." The motto of an American Missionary Society is, "Ready for either," placed under the picture of an ox standing between an altar and a plough. The altar represents suffering, and the

plough service. Either may be ready for you, and you will be ready for either, prepared for all God is preparing for you, if you follow the steps of the great Servant and Sufferer.

Christ's example in His youth should have the greatest charm for you. I have seen a bone (turned into stone) about six inches in length, by which Hugh Miller discovered the size and shape of an old-world fish over twenty feet long, and also many of the "foot-prints of the Creator." If we leave out the flight into Egypt, twelve verses (Luke ii. 40-52) contain all we know about Jesus from the fortieth day to the thirtieth year of His life. His asking questions of the doctors and His subjection to His parents are the only features of His youth that have been preserved; but they are like the bone the geologist found in the rock, from them we can discover His whole life, and so trace His foot-prints, especially the little footprints He has left for little feet. "It is written," Luther says, "that an old bishop longed to know what Jesus did in His youth. His prayer was answered in a dream. He seemed in his sleep to see a carpenter in his shop, and a little boy at his side gathering chips. Then a maiden clothed in green came in, and called them to their meal, and set porridge before them. 'Why does that man stand there?' the little boy said (the bishop was standing at the door), 'shall he not also eat with us?' This so frightened the bishop that he awoke." Luther adds, "Whether this be fable or a true story, I none the

less believe Christ in His childhood looked and acted like other children, in fashion like a man, yet without sin." Yes ; I believe that the child Jesus led a quiet, sweet, simple life, just like the other village children, yet without sin. There was nothing strained, or unearthly, or terror-striking about Him. Thus His youth is described in a single verse, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." His outward life was so natural and pleasant, that He was a universal favourite, as we say. He also lived in childhood for us, leaving every youth an example that he should follow His steps. In the boyhood of Jesus I can discover only three things : He wrought as a carpenter ; He was obedient to His parents ; and He was godly. His life, like the life of every boy, had three circles—the social life, the home-life, and the inner life. We begin with the outermost, and the widest circle, whence we shall find our way to the centre.

1. *His Social Life.*—There can be no doubt that He was a village carpenter till His thirtieth year ;—don't start back from it. He made yokes for the bullocks, and furniture for the neighbours. For when He began His mighty works, the astonished villagers said, "Is not this the carpenter ?" The boyhood of Jesus is thus a terrible rebuke to the boy who hates work ; it teaches us that poverty is no reproach, and that we should never be ashamed of the commonest work, if honestly done ; it shews us that the humblest day-labourers may live the holiest and noblest lives. God gives every boy

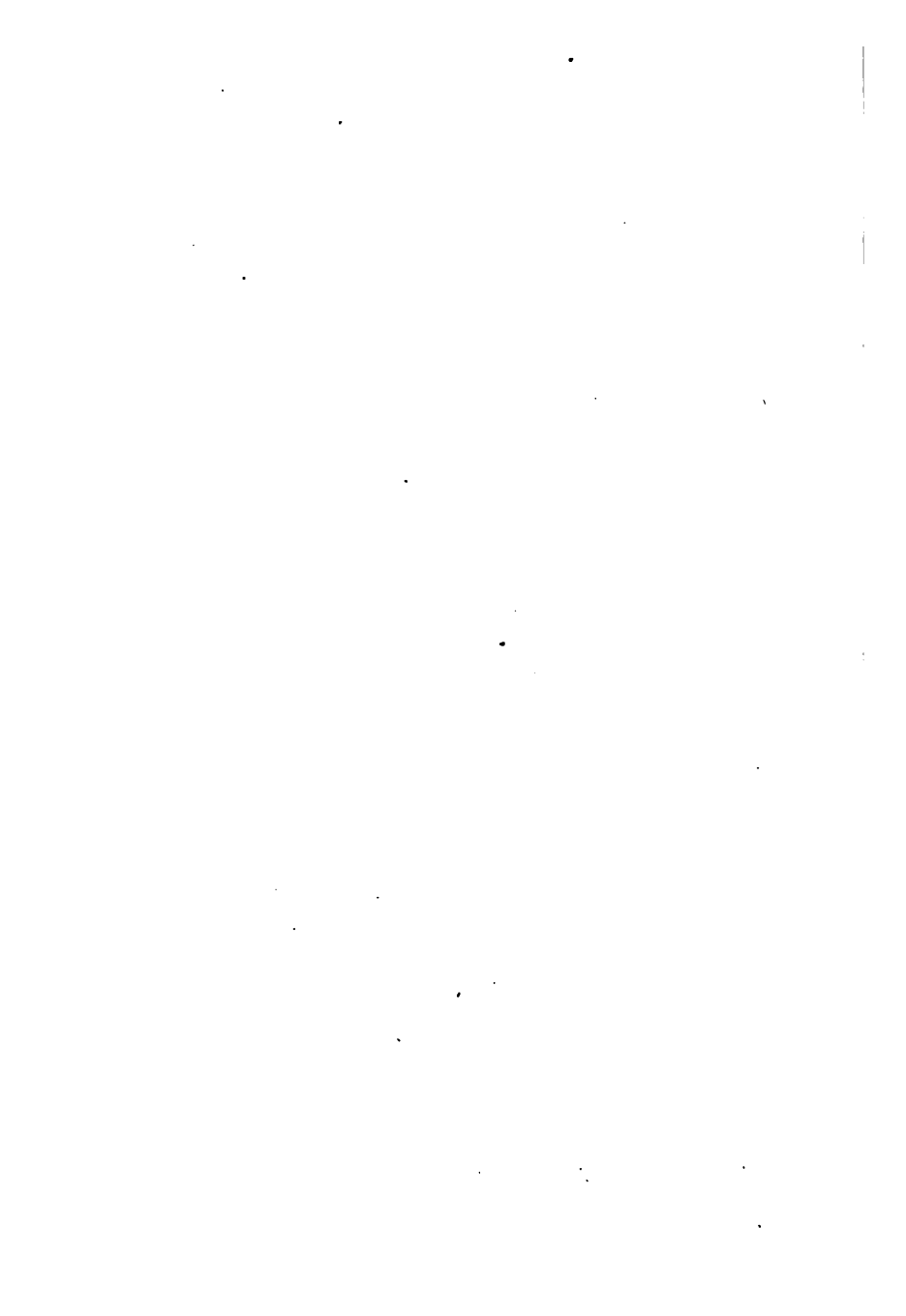
and girl some work to do ; follow Christ's steps in doing it. Put your heart and conscience into it. The Fourth Commandment says, "Six days *shalt* thou labour, and do *all* thy work." You have not noticed, perhaps, that it commands week-day labour quite as much as Sabbath rest. As the Sabbath is sanctified by holy rest, so the other six days are to be sanctified, in some sense, by honest labour ; and you are to labour so heartily that you will do *all* your work. The greatest snare of the poor is a false shame of poverty and plain work ; and the greatest snare of the rich is idleness. Christ's example saves rich and poor from these snares. A book I have gives an account of 12,560 children, who had been sent to the Reformatory in New York, because they had broken the laws. Though they lived in a city where sixty-eight languages are spoken, and belonged to almost every nation under heaven, they all agreed in two points—they all hated work when they entered, and they were reformed as soon as they began to love it. It has been proved that the grace of God and the love of work are the two guardian angels of these children. When I visited the boys' house in that Reformatory, I said to the chaplain, "What sort of boys have you here ?" "They are just boys," he replied beautifully ; "they are neither better nor worse than other boys, only they have had greater temptations." You need as much as they the grace of God, and a Christ-like love of work. I cannot press

this too strongly, for I believe firmly that the most of the vices and miseries of rich and poor are caused or fostered by idleness. If you wish to be happy, you must work heartily ; for all play and no work makes a dull boy, quite as much as all work and no play. The largest book in our language on melancholy closes with this advice, "Be not idle." And be not cast down though your work, like Christ's at Nazareth, should be very humble. You are like the actor in the theatre, who is praised, not for the character he represents, but for the way in which he does it. The king may be hissed, while the peasant is loudly cheered.

You must not fancy that you can serve Christ only by preaching, or doing some great thing. Ancient history records, as I have read, that a king once set free a race of slaves, and decreed that he of their number who first saw the sunlight on the morning of their liberty should be their prince. They all climbed the mountain ; and, as the happy morning drew near, looked eagerly to the East : all but one, who turned towards the West. If you have seen sunrise from a spot where the loftiest mountains rose on the West, you know his reason. He was crowned king, for the rosy light gilded the West before the sun could be seen in the East. So you may gain the heavenly crown, not by worshipping the rising sun, not by turning to what the mass of men call great, but by attending to the smallest matters of daily duty, by doing as unto the Lord such



THE EMANCIPATED SLAVES.



work as Christ found in the workshop of Nazareth. To Christ's freeman, as to that ennobled slave, the sun rises upon the neglected corners of the West. The great miracle of Christ's humble, hard-working youth is an eternal example and encouragement to all the sons and daughters of toil. He has done for labour what He has done for the law—magnified it, and made it honourable. Try to do your everyday work as Christ did His. Then will it become like worship : work done for God, that dieth not. As the child's hymn puts it—

“ But for strength from above, 'tis the Master's plan,
We'll pray, and we'll do the best that we can.”

From the workshop we pass to the hearth, and witness,
2. The *home-life* of the boy Jesus.—One verse gives us all we know about it, “ And we went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them ” (Luke ii. 51). What a sermon on the commandment, “ Honour thy father and thy mother.” To honour is much more than to obey ; it is literally to glorify, to shew them love and reverence, to give them the same sort of honour which you give to God, whose chief representatives they are on earth. “ Children, obey your parents in the Lord,” that is, in the spirit of the Lord Jesus. I have no hope of boys and girls who always disobey and despise their parents. They are fit for everything that's bad. When Paul wished to shew what horrid monsters the heathens were, he said that they were “ without natural affection.” Though your parents' dispositions may be different from yours, respect them none the less. Cheer-

fully make all the sacrifices you can for them; and as surely as there is a God in heaven, you shall never regret it. If you must disobey, do it "in the Lord," and with holy fear, and only because obedience to your father on earth would plainly be disobedience to your Father in heaven. Follow the steps of the boy Jesus, who allowed only His heavenly Father's business to come between Him and His parents. Oh, remember that you may soon stand at your father or mother's grave! I can tell you that strange thoughts will then rush in upon you like a flood. On their funeral-day you will know how much you owe them; and though you have obeyed them in the main, you will deeply regret that you did not shew them more love and reverence. You would give all you have, if it could bring them back, that you might make some amends. A man once wrote on his mother's Bible, under her name, "Oh, if she could but come again, I think I'd vex her so no more!" But the grave had closed its mouth upon her, and he stood alone, weeping and vexing himself in vain.

Christ has left a special example for widows' sons and daughters. As Joseph is not mentioned after Christ's twelfth year, we conclude that he had died early, and that Christ supported his widowed mother by the labour of His own hands. Amid all the agonies of the cross He also thought lovingly of her, and put her under the care of the beloved John. What a model for the children of widows! I sometimes think how true that saying is, "a widow indeed, and desolate." How

desolate earth must look to a widow sitting among her helpless children ! If your mother is a widow, Christ's example comes very close to you, and should inspire you with the determination of acting a pious part in your home. Your mother has a double burden to bear for you, and should receive from you a double share of affection and help. You can do more than all others put together to lighten her burdens, and fill her heart with hope and joy. God help you to follow the steps of the Saviour, who on the cross said to His beloved disciple, "Behold thy mother."

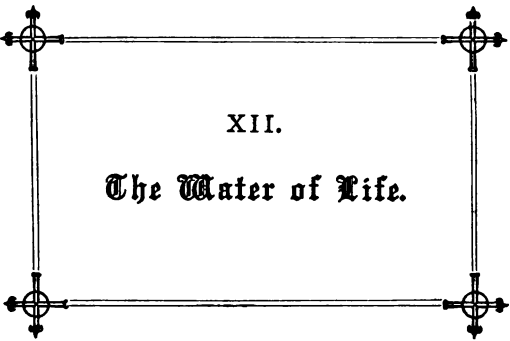
We come now to the centre and source of all—

3. His *inner life*, or hidden life, whence, as from an unfailing fountain, all the streams flowed that made glad his social life, and home-life.—The child Jesus was godly. The one incident of His youth which the Gospels have preserved, His sitting among the doctors in the Temple (He was then just twelve years old), shews how He loved the word, the house, and the people of God. His youth was deeply religious. He was eager to learn what was in the Bible. Thus He "increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man." "The grace of God was upon Him," and made Him graceful even in the eyes of men ; so far was His godly life from being as you might easily fancy it would be, strange and unnatural. Imitate Christ in his hidden life, in the life of faith, and prayer, and sweet thoughts of God ; be like Him, a lover of God's word, and house, and day, and people ; and then you will imitate Him also in obeying

your parents, and in doing your daily work. Remember that Christ lived a human life, that He might teach us to live the life divine. That life begins at "the tree," fills the heart, and moves the feet along the path marked by Christ's steps. He only lives it who trusts in Christ as his Sin-bearer, and takes Christ as his Example. And every day he lives he can say from the heart,

" I long to be like Jesus,
Meek, loving, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father's holy child."





XII.

The Water of Life.





IT is now about 1850 years ago since our Saviour's feet trod this earth. The best-known man in the world at that time was Tiberius, the Roman Emperor. He was, more than any other man has been since, the lord of the whole earth. Millions obeyed him; and he was worshipped as a god. He had then laid aside the cares of a ruler, and was living at Capri, a charming island in the bay of Naples. The sun shone not upon more gorgeous palaces than his, the mountainous ruins of which still fill the traveller with wonder. The whole known world was his, and he had but one chief end in life—to enjoy himself. Was he happy? Nay. Emperor though he was, he could not drive out of that Eden the two serpents of an accusing conscience and a dissatisfied heart. All the millions under his sceptre did not contain one, it was believed, more wretched than himself. He was “hated of all, and hating.” He felt, to use his own words, “that all the gods were destroy-

ing him." Place together these two emperors—the Emperor of the hearts of men, and the Emperor of the world. The one, though having not where to lay His head, offers blessedness to all mankind; the other, having all the kingdoms of the earth, sought happiness for himself only, but could not find it.

I found my text engraven in granite over a well on a Highland roadside. It is John iv. 13 and 14, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Over all the fountains along life's highway you might truly write the first half of my text. There never breathed the man or woman, the boy or girl, who had not a great thirst in the heart; and all seek water to slake their thirst. Jesus meets us wandering up and down the desert in search of water, and He offers to guide us to the fountain of life. My dear boys and girls, I must, by God's help, have you understand—

- I. This Water of Earth; and,*
- II. The Water Jesus gives.*

For the sake of shortness, I shall call the two heads of our address—

- I. This Water.*
- II. The Water.*

I. This Water of Earth, which is the sign of

all earth's joys.—Jesus teaches : 1. That it does not satisfy ; and 2. That it does not last.

1. *This water of earth does not satisfy.*—"Whosoever (no matter who) drinketh of this water shall thirst again." It is not easy to get this water, for "the well is deep," and the water is drawn up only with much toil. Jacob's well is now about seventy-five feet deep ; but it was then probably twice as deep, for most travellers help to fill it up by dropping in stones to find out its depth. It cost Jacob much pains to make it, and the woman to draw up the water. And such like is every spring of earthly joy. You must toil for it as men toil who dig a well in the solid rock ; and then you must draw up the water with a golden bucket, and how few can get that ; but, after you have done all, the water will not quench your thirst. Oh, how many weary themselves with "the toil of dropping buckets into empty wells, and growing old in drawing nothing up"! Drink your fill of it, and still the heart burns with unsatisfied desires.

There is an interesting little book called *The Mirage of Life*. *Mirage* is the French word for a very strange sight the traveller often sees in the desert. Tortured with raging thirst, he fancies that he sees ahead a sparkling lake, or a flowing river amid green trees and soft meadows. This wonderful vision is created by the action of the sun on the burning sand, aided by the fond imaginations of the traveller. He is enchanted ; rushes forward to plunge into the water ;

but, lo ! the beautiful vision melts away, or retires to a distance. He chases the cruel cheat from place to place, till, overcome with fatigue and despair, he sinks upon the sand. This book gives instances of the most successful worldlings of every class—poets, orators, statesmen, soldiers, merchants, &c.—all of whom confessed that they were utterly disappointed with “this water.” The pleasure they pursued was like the mirage of the desert. You could not mention many things in which all people are agreed ; but there is at least one point about which all think alike in the end. It is, that the pleasures of this world cannot fill the human heart. If there be anything perfectly true under the sun, that is. We all place our earthly joys in the future, rather than in the present ; we borrow our happiness from hope, which deceives us like the mirage ; when any good fortune comes to us, our heart, after its first raptures, confesses its disappointment. I knew a boy who was sure he would be as happy as a king if he could but gain the gold medal at the academy. Well, he got it ; but he could not comprehend why it brought so little joy, and so much disappointment with it. One of England’s Queens confessed that her royal palaces and jewels delighted her for a few weeks after her marriage, when they began to weary and oppress her. The leader of fashion at the court of Louis XV. believed that if she were the possessor of a coveted palace in Paris, she should have all the felicity which God gives to his elect in heaven, as she put it. After

great efforts, for the well was deep, she got the palace, and had it superbly furnished; and it pleased her immensely—how long? Just two days, she said. A statesman, than whom perhaps no man in our day has been more successful, lately gave his experience of “this water” in these words: “Youth is a blunder, middle age a struggle, old age a regret.” You have Solomon’s testimony in the second chapter of Ecclesiastes. He tried every stream of earthly delight, “and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit.” Like the butterfly, he went gaily from flower to flower in his earthly paradise, but he got no honey. If he failed, there is no hope for you and me, “for what can the man do that cometh after the king? Even that which hath been already done;” and that is just to prove the truth of my text. The Roman Emperor Severus, who died at York about 1700 years ago, said on his death-bed, “I have been everything, and everything is nothing.” He made them bring the urn which was to contain his ashes. Laying his hand upon it, he addressed it: “Little urn, thou shalt soon contain one for whom this whole world was too small.” You remember that when Alexander the Great had conquered every nation, he sat down on the furthest edge of his dominions, and, like a disappointed child, wept that there was not another world to conquer. You see it is the same old story from age to age. Christ and the whole world agree for once; both declare that “whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.”

Do not fancy that Christ's words apply to the lower, but not to the nobler of earth's joy. Many of earth's enjoyments are like the waters of Jacob's well—"Our father Jacob drank thereof himself, and his children, and *his cattle*." Man has some pleasures in common with the beasts of the field. We say that the pleasures of the drunkard and the evil-liver are beastly; but we wrong the poor beasts when we say so, for no beast degrades itself as these wicked men do. But you must believe that even the noblest pleasures of earth leave the heart unfilled. Take knowledge,—the drinker at this pure stream shall thirst again; for the mind is not satisfied with knowing. No one ever drank more deeply of this water than the poet Goethe. He foraged for food in every realm of science, as an army which has used all its stores, and goes abroad for more. He compared himself to Samuel when Jesse's seven sons appeared before him, and he asked, "But are here all thy children?" He wrote in scorn—

" This case was mine too, when at leisure
What all the sages wrote I read,
When with their small wits they would measure
The wealth of worlds around us spread.
I thought of Samuel then, when he
Made Jesse's sons in row appear,
And when the seven were counted, said—
' Are *all* thy children here?'"

No, thank God, "there remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep;" and his Son and Lord maketh His sheep lie down in green pastures, and beside

the still waters. He gives us that knowledge which is life everlasting. But why add instances? Every one sooner or later writes over his favourite earthly fountain, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again."

2. *Earth's joys do not last.*—Even if they did satisfy, you cannot be sure of keeping them. The water Jesus gives has to do with the life everlasting; the other water is not lasting. Travellers now-a-days often find Jacob's well dry. Perhaps it sometimes ran dry even in Christ's day. When Xerxes, the Persian monarch, surveyed his magnificent army of over five millions, with which he had invaded Europe, a courtier said to him, "What more is needed to complete your bliss?" "Permanence," Xerxes sadly replied. Croesus, the richest man in the world in his day, once shewed all his treasures to the sage Solon, and asked, "Am not I the happiest man you have ever seen?" "Wait till the end," the sage replied. The streams which delight you for a time are uncertain and treacherous, and often fail us in the drought of summer. How often is man's happiness buried for ever in the grave! Yesterday the flowers were blooming in our garden, but the night brought an untimely frost that nipt them, and to-day their blossoms are trailing in the dust. As Robert Burns says—

" But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed ;—
Or like the snow-flake in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever ;

Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place ;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm."

"And must I quit all these?" said Richelieu piteously, as in his last days he was wheeled through his splendid picture gallery. How strange, how affecting the uncertainty that hangs over the best bliss of earth! A dear friend told me that by the new year his life-battle would be won; that he would be then over the steep hill-top, with the smooth table-land of life before him. The new year came. Though feeling ill, he balanced his books, and went home late on the last night of the year—and lay down to die. However pure and satisfying your earthly joys may be, you may be taken from them, or they may be taken from you any day. This is true of the very best of them, of home, whose pleasures should come nearest the pleasures of heaven. In the palace at Christiania I have seen a series of well-known paintings on the walls, illustrating peasant-life in Norway. The pictures set forth the joys of husband and wife from early childhood. In the last picture you see the aged pair, who have outlived nearly all their earthly enjoyments, reading their Bible, and underneath these words, "Alone with the Bible." The painter had an only son who was the joy of his life, and he grew sick and died. A Norwegian poet sought to console the father in a poem which he called, "Alone with the Bible."

You may easily think that the Bible is a sad and

gloomy book, because it tells you so plainly that earth's joys do not satisfy, and do not last. That would be a terrible mistake. It was not cruel in Christ to speak these words to the woman at the well. It would have been very cruel if He had not at the same time pointed her to better joys than earth can give. He tells you to enjoy without fear all the innocent pleasures of this life; but He warns you against neglecting the heavenly pleasures that fill the soul, and last for ever. He pleads with you to forsake earth's polluted fountain, not that you may perish with thirst, but that you may turn to—

II. The Water Jesus gives.—For: 1. It fills the heart; and 2. It flows over upon others. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

1. *It fills the heart*; it is the water of life; it gives us all the life that is possible for man; it gives complete satisfaction while it lasts, and it lasts for ever. Its name is "living water," or "water of life." I once visited a friend who told me that a new-made widow had been spending a few days with him. Her husband, an English clergyman, on a tour through Palestine, reached Mount Sinai. The guide pointed out a peak which, he said, no Englishman had ever trodden. Whereupon the clergyman determined that he would make it out. The guide protested, and urged the danger, but was at length bribed by a large sum of money to run the risk. They

lost the way, and water failed. They searched for water in vain, and the Englishman perished from thirst. Had a cupful of cold water been put to his lips as he lay there, he might have said, "Oh, this is living water ; this is the water of life to me !" You have let a tear drop on the touching accounts of shipwrecked sailors in an open boat, or on some raft. Often when thirst makes their tongue cleave to the roof of their mouth, they drink the sea-water, grow mad, and die. The salt water is deadly water, the water of death to them. But when a shower comes they strip, and spread out every rag to catch the drops, and when all is soaked, they suck out the water, and are revived. The rain from heaven is the water of life, without which they could not have existed a day longer.

Again, look at the stagnant water in the canal. You may hear old country folks saying, "That's very dead water." But look at the beautiful water that bubbles up from the well—what life there, what coolness, what refreshing virtue ! I do not know a finer illustration of the undying freshness of the gospel. The water in the well, on whose parapet the wearied Jesus sat, was as delightfully cool and fresh to Him and to the woman, as it was to Jacob the first day on which he struck the spring. And the grace of God loses none of its exquisite sweetness through age. Take it, taste it ; and it may be to you all it ever has been to sinners saved. Christ's words also remind us of the satisfying abundance of grace. I once had a talk with the man who has charge

of the great pipe which conveys the water of Loch Katrine to Glasgow. He had lived there before the pipe was laid. I asked whether the lake was not drained by supplying the city. "Oh, no!" he said, "it mak's nae odds." Six hundred thousand men and women and children, and also much cattle, were drinking out of it every day; and yet it seemed as full as ever. The sense of such beneficent abundance wakened in us more pleasure than the glorious scenery; and a yet deeper pleasure should fill our hearts at the thought of the abundance of the water of life flowing from the boundless fountain of heavenly mercy. All this Christ holds out to you as a gift. A traveller writes that no cry in the streets of Cairo is more striking than that of the water-carrier, with his water-skin on his shoulder, shouting, "The gift of God." He sells it however. Christ advertises the water of life in such terms as these, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, . . . buy . . . without money and without price." Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely, or, as Wyckliffe put it, *gratis*.

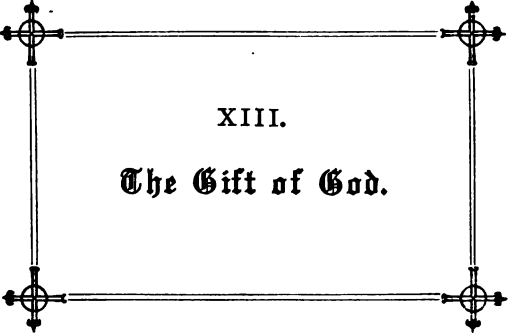
I once heard a country gentleman say a few words at the close of a religious meeting. He was listened to with hushed attention, for he was known as one who for years had drunk deeply at streams of false delight. A great change had come over him, and now, for the first time, he was confessing Christ in public. He spoke very briefly and modestly. I remember his closing sentence: "I have great pleasure in declaring

to you that, since I began the Christian life, I have found that satisfaction which for years I had vainly sought in other quarters." Every true Christian says Amen to such a testimony. Many repeat it on their death-beds. One of the last utterances of Sir David Brewster was, "I feel so safe, so satisfied." Whosoever drinketh of the water Jesus gives shall not thirst for any other water, but shall only thirst for more of His. Jesus still stands among men, as He stood amid the crowd on the last, that great day of the feast, and cries, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." If you desire this living water, and have it not, you are like Hagar and Ishmael famishing in the wilderness, while an exhaustless fountain was at their side. God open your eyes to see it, that you may drink and live.

2. This life-giving water, which fills the heart, *flows over upon others*: "It shall be in him as a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Dr Livingstone discovered in the heart of Africa a broad upland, six or seven hundred miles in length, in which he placed the sources of the great African rivers. The soil was like a sponge, half land and half water. Its gushing springs are so many, that it would take a life-time to count them. The water from these hidden fountains flows on for ever, and springs up into life. It gives life to whatever it touches. The Arabians truly call Egypt "the gift of its river," and "the garden of the world." The Nile valley is the very same as the Arabian and

African deserts in all things but one ; and that is the water. All Egypt may turn to the centre of Africa, as the Christian turns to Christ, and say, "All my springs are in thee." When Christ spoke His words of love to men, the world was a moral and spiritual desert. But what a change now in many places, and all through this life-giving water. As it is in the great world around, so is it in the little world within. Here is a feeble spring that but half fills the well dug around it. A thick, green scum gathers upon the top, the water loses all its sweetness, and horrid things make it their home. But here is a strong, healthy spring, ever bubbling over. Its waters carry fertility and beauty down the whole valley, blessing man and beast, and the very earth. And such is the new life created by Christ. It has an outcome, an abundance, a power to do good. Though sin may have hardened the heart like the rock, the touch of Jesus, like the touch of Moses' rod, makes a refreshing stream gush forth. Thus this ignorant woman became a blessing to all Samaria. And if you receive the water of life, it will, through you, flow forth to your fellow-men. It will make you the best sons and daughters, the best masters and servants, the best citizens and relatives, the best neighbours and friends. Your influence will be as a strong stream that gladdens all it touches. This, then, is the sum of Christ's words : earth's joys neither satisfy nor last ; but heaven's joys fill the heart, and flow over upon others. And may this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.





XIII.

The Gift of God.





THE palace at Dresden is famed for its jewel-room, which contains the crown-jewels of the kings of Saxony. One of the most curious I saw there is said to have been the gift of a Saxon king to his bride. It seems a lump of rusty iron about the size of a duck's egg. The story goes that the princess was at first so disappointed with it, that she dashed it upon the ground: she was expecting a gift worthy of his love and wealth. The shock set free a secret spring; the iron egg flew open, and, lo! a silver yolk rolled out. She picked up the yolk, and, handling it, touched another spring, when the yolk also opened, and revealed a golden chicken. Her disgust began to yield to delight. Taking the chicken in both hands, another secret spring was moved, and out came a jewelled crown! Great was her joy then, but a greater wonder was in store. For, fingering the crown, it also fell asunder, and her eyes were blessed with the sight of a magnificent engagement ring which her lover had hidden in its heart. Her cup was now full; long-looked

for had come at last. The gift was a token that the royal giver was hers, and that she would reign for life as queen. When you come to the heart of the Bible you find God's great gift to man ; and in many things it is like that gift of the Saxon king. For it comes to us with no great outward shew ; by it the soul is espoused to the Giver ; and it crowns the receiver with royal honours. Of it the apostle speaks in our text, Rom. v. 17 : " They which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." I once read that verse at the close of a mission-meeting. The chairman, forgetting where he was, started to his feet, and said, " Read that again ; I have read it hundreds of times, but it never struck me so much before. Why, it contains the whole gospel." I hope that, at the close of this address, you will be of the same opinion.

Our subject is simple enough. God help me to make the discourse as simple as the subject.

God's gift, like every gift, is found in two hands : first, in the hand of the giver ; and then, in the hand of the receiver. That will be our division—

I. The Gift in the Hand of God.

II. The Gift in the Hand of Man.

I. The Gift as it lies in the hand of God.—
Our verse tells us *What* it is, *Whence* it comes, and *How* it comes to us.

1. *What the gift is.* When a gift is offered to me, the first question I ask is, What will it give me that I had not before? What will it add to my stock and store? God's great gift is "the gift of *righteousness*." I am unrighteous; for "there is none righteous, no, not one." Righteousness is what I ought to have, but have not; nor can I ever get it by my own doings, or by the help of man. The Bible teaches me to scorn and cast away all my own righteousness as filthy rags, and I dare not think it good enough for God to accept. How, then, can I, an unrighteous one, get righteousness? The answer is, God holds it out to me as a free gift. Here is a young merchant, who hopes to be one day a merchant prince, with a castle in the country, and £10,000 a-year. But he does not dream of getting all that at once, and for nothing. He must be the slave of business for years; and as a traveller, covered with dust and sweat, climb one mountain-top after another; and thus, after some twenty years, he shall grasp, he hopes, his darling prize. Many religious people hope to gain righteousness exactly as that man hopes to gain a fortune. It looms before them far away in the dim future. They hope to become righteous after many years of doing the best they can. That is man's way of righteousness; but it is very different from God's way. It would be as easy for man to reach the skies by piling mountains upon mountains, as it would be for him to make himself righteous before God. But God holds out righteousness, not as wages, or a prize, or a

reward of merit, but as a present gift to the unrighteous. You are not only to end with it ; you are to begin with it. The dying thief was made righteous in that way ; so was the Philippian jailor ; so is every one who understands these wonderful words, "the gift of righteousness."

" Jesus ! how glorious is Thy grace !
When in Thy name we trust,
Our faith receives a righteousness
That makes the sinner just."

2. *Whence* the gift comes. It comes from "the abundance of grace ;" it is "the gift by grace." Grace is the kindness of superiors to inferiors. Thus we say, "Her gracious Majesty," and "his grace the Duke." God's grace is God's kindness to sinful man. It is not a kindness that spends itself in feeling, or in words ; but it pours itself out in great deeds. It is God's mercy drawn out by man's misery, and giving him all blessings without money, and without price. If a man brings something in his hand, or fancies that he deserves God's favour, let him not think that he can receive grace. He who comes empty-handed, like a beggar, he, and none other, can receive it. The apostle rejoices in "the abundance of grace." Suppose a fountain bursting out all round without ceasing, suppose each outburst to overpass the last, suppose these overflowing waters to become a mighty ocean whose waves ever advance on every side ; that would give you some notion of grace abounding, and much more abounding

in all ages and nations, and among all sorts of people. To those who receive it, grace is constantly excelling all its past gifts. It is like a silent sea, where deep is added unto deep, whose waves, overflowing every out-flow, go far out beyond all our dreams, and always urge each other on till they break on the shore of glory; and glory probably also advances as a rising tide without an ebb, flowing on for ever. No wonder a little girl, who was getting a Bible lesson on the grace of God, said, "Mother, that's not true; for if it were, everybody would be speaking about it." A gentleman was one day, as he told me, walking along a street in Edinburgh, a few yards behind Dr Chalmers, who seemed in a sort of day-dream, noticing nothing around him. Some one stepped across the street, and put his arm in the arm of the Doctor, who awoke, and said with much feeling, "Oh man, I was just thinking what a glorious thing free grace is!" Yes, nothing is more glorious; for it holds out to us as a free gift what were otherwise for ever impossible to sinful men.

We have now seen *what* God's great gift is, and *whence* it comes; the question yet remaining unanswered is—

3. *How* it comes to us. It is "by One, Jesus Christ." This chapter gives us some of the deep things of God in the simplest words. All sinners are looked upon by God as if they were but one man, and the first Adam is that one man. And all the saved are thought of as if they were but one man, and the Second Adam is that man. "Death reigned by one," and "grace reigns . . .

by Jesus Christ." Our union with Adam explains our sin, and our union with Christ explains our salvation. No words can be simpler than these, "in Adam," "in Christ;" yet how much they teach us! Mark well that salvation is by Christ, and by Christ only. It is by One; not one thing, but one living person, the Saviour. I knew a man who was an earnest seeker after God for years. Nearly everybody believed him to be a Christian but himself. He maintained that he was no Christian, though he wished to be one. One day he said to me, "I have found out my mistake at last." "And what is it?" I said. He replied, "I have been expecting salvation through things, but I now see that I can be saved only by the Saviour." Three words in this verse, had he understood them, would have turned his darkness into noon-day—"by One, Jesus." He was expecting salvation through the best things in the world, such as the Bible, prayer, the church, good behaviour, and so on. Still these were but things; the means of grace, but not grace itself. Like the Pharisees in Christ's day, he did not go beyond the means, and the result was, that by the means he missed the end. Oh, tarry not in things! Through sacred things, go straight forward to the sacred Person. Use all the means of grace as stepping-stones by which your soul rises to the Saviour. Receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to you in the gospel. For salvation from beginning to end is by One only. Shakespeare understood this great truth, for he wrote in his will: "I

commend my soul into the hands of God my Creator, hoping, and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting." Very different is Cardinal Antonelli's will, which was given to the world the other day: "Before anything else, I commend my poor soul to the infinite mercy of God, trusting that through the intercession of the most holy immaculate Mary, and of my patron saints—St Peter, St Paul, St James, and St Louis—He may grant me remission of my sins, and make me worthy of the eternal glory of Paradise." The poor cardinal did not expect salvation "by One, Jesus Christ," but by five; and the Saviour was not even one of the five. What a pity that Mary, the three apostles, and the French king left no room for Jesus Christ in the thoughts of the dying man!

But even many Protestants are like Olaf, the first Norse king who professed Christianity, of whom the chronicles say, that he was "mixed in his faith." In peace he prayed to Christ; but when he waxed hot in battle, he usually called upon Thor and Odin. Old writers called such people "duty-faith men," because they build their hope upon a foundation which is formed partly by faith in their own works, and partly by faith in Christ. While, as we shall soon see, duty and works have a great place, that is not their place; for there is only one foundation, which is Christ Jesus. Faith in Christ and faith in ourselves are like the potter's clay and the iron in the feet of Daniel's image, which would not

cleave together so as to form a firm foundation. We must despair of saving ourselves, or of helping to save ourselves. We must put all our trust in Jesus only. Our prayer must be—O Christ, my Saviour, Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Be sure you have no wrong thoughts of God. Behold Him standing before you as the great Giver. His outstretched hand is both full and open. In the abundance of His grace He freely offers you "the gift of righteousness." And Christ Jesus has come for the very purpose of bringing this gift to you, and bringing you to it.

Look now at—

II. God's Gift in the hand of Man.—For every gift there must be two hands: the hand of the giver, and the hand of the receiver; for the gift is meant to pass from the one hand into the other. The gift is the possession of the giver; and it becomes the possession of the receiver the moment he receives it. Thus the verse hinges on that word "receive." All depends on your receiving it. "They who receive (all of them, but they only) shall reign in life." Gospel-hearers are lost, not because of their sins, but because they will not receive God's gift. Free as the gift is, it blesses only those who take it. A storm once made me a prisoner in a country-house. I turned to a dusty library, from which I took down two books that promised an hour's entertainment. One was the *Life of Wellington*. I read that, after the battle of Waterloo, Parlia-

ment voted him the thanks of the nation, a dukedom, and £400,000. Before the matter was finally settled, a deputation waited on him to learn whether he would accept the gift. Of course he accepted it, and then the abundance of the nation's liberality became his possession. But do not say "of course" too quickly. For, having flung that book aside, and taken up the other—it was the *Life of Washington* by Jared Sparks—I chanced very curiously to come upon a similar passage. There I read that, after Washington had won the independence of his country, Congress resolved to erect a statue to him, and give him a large sum of money. But he at once declared that he would not accept a single cent. They reminded him that he had served as general for eight and a-half years without pay, and they pled earnestly; but all in vain. He had received an ample reward, he said nobly, in the victory which God had granted to their arms. They then ingeniously invested a large sum in his name in some government undertakings. Having completed the deeds before he was aware of it, they told him that it was too late to alter them. But still he would not accept a cent. The whole nation was in a generous conspiracy to make him rich; but he was a man, and had a will of his own, and so they could not make him rich without his consent. Their gift still remained theirs, and not his, for he would not receive it. These two cases illustrate my subject, except in this, that each of the generals had fairly earned

the gift offered to him. For God presses upon you durable riches and heavenly honours ; but you have a will, and your will gives you the awful power of rejecting God's gift. How terrible it is for a sinner to say *no* to God, and scorn His offered grace ! Will you do that ?

You sometimes hear people talking about the freeness and simplicity of the gospel. Here it is : " They who receive . . . shall reign." It does not say, they who receive after years of grief for sin or frightful convictions. It does not say, they who receive in this way or that, or who are like some great Christian. It just says, " they who receive ;" that's all. But men are always for buying, instead of just receiving God's gift ; and many would narrow it by false limits of their own. It matters little what you have or have not, if you really receive the great gift. " But am I to do nothing ?" do you ask. Yes, you are to do a great deal. You are to throw away all faith in your own good deeds ; you are to come empty-handed to the full-handed Giver ; you are to give up the idea that you must first bring something of your own ; you are to receive the gift as a gift ; and then you are to shew by a holy life your gratitude to the God of your salvation.

" What blessings Thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away :
For God is paid when man receives ;
T' enjoy is to obey."

Our text means, they who are receivers, constantly receiving the abundance of grace. Some officers are

called receivers of customs. They receive customs, not once for all, but always. Receiving customs is their employment, which gives them their name and their livelihood. So a Christian is a receiver of grace. He is always receiving grace, and more grace. He never thinks he has enough ; he always hungers for more. There are many kinds of grace : pardoning grace, comforting grace, sanctifying grace, and so on. The Christian does not pick and choose among the various kinds of grace ; but he takes all. He opens his heart to receive "the abundance of grace." Thus every one who receives "the gift of righteousness" is a doer of good works, and in all things a follower of Christ. For the apostle says, "They who receive . . . shall reign in life." What does he mean ? These Romans, before their conversion, were slaving in spiritual death. Like some now-a-days, they might boast about seeing life, and knowing life ; yet they were after all the poorest of slaves—the bond-slaves of sin. But their new life is worthy of being compared to the life of a king, and of such a king as the Roman emperor, who ruled over the whole known world. Paul tells them that all the receivers of grace live like kings : they have a right royal life, not only in heaven, but even here and now on earth ; they have the highest honours, the most perfect freedom, and the fullest satisfaction. I wish I could persuade you that a godless life at its very best is most mean and miserable, and that the Christian's is the most noble and blessed life possible to man. I fear that many boys

think that life the grandest which some rich men spend among dogs and horses, and in hunting. The poet Cowper paints for us a man of that sort. He is nearly as good a hunter as any hound he keeps, although his scent is not quite so keen. But his hunting ends at length—

“ Again impetuous to the field he flies,
Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies ;
Like a slain deer the tumbrel brings him home,
Unmiss'd but by his dogs and by his groom.”

Surely God made an immortal like you for a nobler life than that. Alongside of such a wasted and selfish life place a life devoted to the glory of God and the good of man. Let it be ever so humble, how great is its nobleness ! I have in my mind a poor widow, who seemed as forlorn as any creature could be. She was kept alive by charity ; her children had forsaken her, and a terrible disease was killing her by inches. But her faith triumphed over agony and the fear of death ; she had perfect peace, and breathed an angelic sweetness of spirit. It did one's heart good to visit her. As I left her garret, I felt that if she had been a crowned queen she would not have been one whit more worthy of homage. Being a receiver of the abundance of grace, she reigned in life ; she reigned even on a death-bed of agony, by One, Christ Jesus.

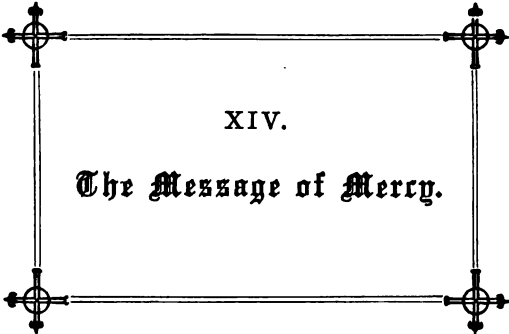
Another case : I was at the funeral of a woman who had to work hard for her daily bread. As her coffin was carried out to the hearse, a great lamentation arose out-

side. By the time we fell into our places behind the hearse, nearly all the windows in the street were opened, and filled with people, who were weeping. The cause soon appeared. A company of poor girls who formed the Bible class of that woman, had come over at their meal-hour; and when they saw the coffin of their best earthly friend, they broke forth into a wailing which made all the beholders weep. She had spent her spare hours in teaching them to read, and had shewn them all Christian kindness; and with their own money they placed a tomb-stone on her grave, with this inscription, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Do you not perceive in the life of that humble woman more true nobility than belongs to the lives of all the frivolous daughters of vanity in our city?

To be a Christian is the highest of all honours. The humblest Christian should therefore cherish a feeling of self-respect and divine dignity which would make him shun, not only what is sinful, but also everything that is mean and unworthy. When the French Revolution broke out, the young Duke of Orleans had to fly for his life. With his clothes all tattered, and carrying with him only a crab stick, as one historian relates, he reached Switzerland in disguise. He earned his bread as an assistant-schoolmaster in a Swiss village. When he was called to the throne of France as Louis Philippe, the villagers said, "Well, while he was with us he did

nothing unworthy of a king." Though none in the village knew his noble birth, he remembered it, and did his daily work nobly; and the humblest Christian should act as that prince acted in his obscurity. He should take care to do nothing unworthy of his Master. He should strive to live in all things as one who is in training for glory and honour and immortality. That is, he should "reign in life." You see, then, how grace ennobles all who receive it and use it well. The gospel was by God "ordained before the world unto our glory." The kingdom of grace is like no other kingdom, for its monarch is "the King of kings." Not only does Christ reign over all the kings of the earth, but every one of His subjects is a king, with more honour than any earthly king, as such, possesses. For all the receivers of grace reign in life here; and in the coming glory, they shall reign with Christ, world without end. Amen.





XIV.

The Message of Mercy.





MY DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,—I have just begun my ministry among you, and to-day I wish to tell you what it means. I want to answer such questions as these: "Why has this new church been built? Why has a pastor come here? What good is to come out of it all?" Every preacher should be a humble imitator of the great apostle; and in 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, at the close of these two verses, he tells you, that ours is "the ministry of reconciliation;" the word we bring you is "the word of reconciliation;" our message to you is, "Be ye reconciled to God." Reconciliation is a big word; but it is not a hard word. The youngest scholar can easily understand it. Some years ago, two great and good men lived in Amsterdam. One day they quarrelled; and, after some hot words, parted in a rage. But they soon cooled down, and each felt that he had not acted in a Christ-like way. Strangely enough, they both started about the same time in the evening, wishing to make up the quarrel.

They met halfway, and resolved to let bygones be bygones, and become good friends as before. One of them pointed to the sun that was sinking in the west, and said with a smile, "We are just in the nick of time; 'let not the sun go down upon your wrath.'" That was a reconciliation; they were foes before they met, and they parted as fast friends. Reconciliation is friendship after a strife, peace after war, love in place of wrath.

I wish to speak to you—and may God by His good Spirit help me to speak, and you to hear—I wish to speak to you about—

I. The Need.

II. The Nature.

III. The Word of Reconciliation.

I. The Need of Reconciliation.—God would never have sent us a message of reconciliation unless we had needed it. If we had all been the friends of God, then reconciliation would have been out of the question. You never heard of the reconciliation of Jonathan and David, for they never quarrelled. Each loved the other as his own soul. But Jacob and Esau were reconciled. They sadly needed it, for Esau was so angry with Jacob that he sought to slay him. It is plain, then, that we have somehow fallen out with God; the peace has been broken between us; things are out of joint; God has a great quarrel and controversy with

us sinners. The quarrel is not only on one side, as when Cain quarrelled with Abel, while Abel did not quarrel with Cain. God has a holy opposition to us, and we have an unholy opposition to God. We are against Him ; and He is against us so long as we are in our sins. Adam and Eve were at first the good children of God ; but as soon as they sinned, they feared and fled from God, and God in holy anger drove them out of Eden.

Now, if you are not reconciled yet, you do need to be reconciled. I can prove it from every part of the Bible. "God is angry with the wicked every day." "His face is set against them that do evil." There is no end to the texts that speak in that way. The Bible also declares that we are against God by nature and wicked works ; "for the carnal mind is enmity against God."

But I need not search the Bible for proofs that you need to be reconciled to God. Do you not know perfectly well that you need it ? Let us see. A frank, smart boy I knew came to me with a letter, and waited for an answer. He had been attending some boys' meetings, and I said to him, "Many of our boys like you are seeking the Saviour. Do you think that you are a Christian yet ?" "No," he replied firmly. "Are you quite sure ?" I asked. "Yes," he said. "What makes you so sure that you are not a Christian ?" I asked again. He replied in a slow, solemn tone, "The devil tempts me, and I swear every day." He knew

that he was breaking the third commandment, and that therefore he could be no Christian. And if you are a swearer, you do sorely need to be reconciled to God.

Again, is there a girl who disobeys her parents? That girl cannot be, like Abraham, the friend of God. You know how earnest the Bible is about your obeying your parents. I know that the best girl in the world may sometimes forget herself, and let pass an angry word, and wear a sulky look, and yet on the whole be an obedient child. Your character is known, not by two or three short acts, but by your habits. But if it is your way to disobey often, then you grieve your Father in heaven, as well as your father on earth; and you sadly need to be reconciled to God. Or take prayer: if you never bend the knee, or if you do it only because your mother wants you; if it is a dull form, and you are glad when it is over; if you feel that you could get on well enough without prayer, that is one of the surest signs that your heart is not right with God. Prayerless people cannot be God's people. These are some plain marks by which you may find out whether you have yet been reconciled. But some of you who have not yet put your trust in Christ may say, "I feel no hatred of God; my mind is not enmity against Him; I thank Him every day for His many mercies." I once read in the life of a great man—Jonathan Edwards—that when he was a boy he thought that he loved God, and was very religious. But when he was about twenty years of age, God's spirit deeply moved him, and he

then found to his amazement that he really hated God. This is how he was mistaken—he had wrong views of God. The God he fancied that he loved was not the living and true God, but a sort of idol, made not by his fingers, but his fancies ; and when he came face to face with the real God of the Bible, his whole soul rose in rebellion against Him. Oh, take care that you don't fall into the same mistake !

The sinner not reconciled is the foe of God. If you are against God, then you *are* against God ; and if you keep to your sins, God is against you. What a thought that is ! Ask yon wretched man doomed to death, and he will tell you that it is an awful thing for a weak man to have man and man's law against him ; but to have God and God's law against you, that is—I can give no name to it. To breathe God's air, to enjoy God's sunshine, and be God's foe ; to rise up and lie down the enemy of God ; to have a life that hangs by a single thread, and yet be against the Almighty ! Can a poor, perishing man rush against the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler ? To keep up such a strife is madness ; for the end of it must be ruin. Surely we can gain nothing by such a war. Surely it is high time this quarrel should cease. Let all throw down the weapons of rebellion, and seek peace with God. Listen all to the word I bring you, "Be ye reconciled to God." The need of reconciliation is plain ; we shall now shew—

II. The Nature of Reconciliation.—The ques-

tion now is, "How can I be reconciled to God?" Reconciliation among men is often very hard work. It is not easy to bring people who have quarrelled together, and make them friends again. I have known boys and girls in the same school, servants in the same house, and, I am sorry to say, brothers and sisters in the same family, not speaking to one another for months, but nursing their hot wrath, and vowing vengeance. I have sometimes tried to reconcile enemies, and have felt that I might nearly as soon make the rivers run from the sea to the mountain-tops, or hurl the mountains into the sea. And when nations like France and Germany, or Russia and Turkey, begin war, the wound is not healed for generations. What honours would be heaped upon the man who should reconcile two nations at war ; yet how small would his work seem when compared with what our Reconciler has accomplished ! Reconciliation between God and man is not in every way the same as reconciliation between man and man. For in almost every strife between man and man there are faults on both sides. Yet reconciliation between God and us is not easy, for there are or were many difficulties on God's side and on ours : on God's side, in His holy law, and holy hatred of sin ; and on our side, in our wicked and wayward hearts. But, thank God, there is hope for us. Rebel man is not like the rebel angels, to whom no ambassador has been sent offering terms of peace. Our text shews us how we can be reconciled. I hope many of you are like a boy who was asked why he attended

his Bible class so regularly. He said, "Because I like to think." I hope you like to think about the great things of the Bible. I am sure you can understand reconciliation. Just try it now. This text makes the whole matter plain; and we will take it up bit by bit.

1. Reconciliation *begins with God*; for verse 18 says, "All things (about reconciliation) are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself." He is in the right, and we are in the wrong. We should go to Him first, but He has come to us first, though we have done Him so much wrong. How wonderful His patience and mercy! Could we have complained if He had waited till we had first gone to Him for pardon? As this is a matter between God and you—you two only—begin with God, not with man, or with anything else, but with God Himself. Go to Him, and say, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." It is with Him only that you have to do: be alone with Him in this matter; for it is all between your two selves.

2. *By Jesus Christ*. You say, "I know it must be between God and me; but how am I to come to God, and deal with God?" Read on in the 18th verse, "God who hath reconciled us to Himself *by Jesus Christ*; and also in verse 19, "God was *in Christ*, reconciling." We have now taken another step toward the full explanation. Reconciliation is of God, and by Jesus Christ. God comes to us in Christ, and we come to God in Christ. Christ is the only meeting-place between God and us. "There is one Mediator between God and men, the

man Christ Jesus." A mediator is a middle-man, who comes in between two who have quarrelled, lays a hand upon each, and so makes peace between them. Jesus Christ is both God and man. He touches both God and us, and so is our Reconciler. He is also called the Prince of Peace, because He makes peace after it had been broken. His work is called the atonement, that is, the at-one-ment: the word is so written in some old books. You speak of people who have fallen out as being at sixes-and-sevens, and of friends as being *at one*. Christ comes between God and us, whom sin had separated, and makes us at one. He atones and reconciles. It is sin that has made the distance between God and us. But for sin, we should all have been God's loving friends, as Adam and Eve were before the fall. Christ takes up our sin, and takes it away. He has removed this mountain of separation between God and us. He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Come to Christ, then; trust in Him, put your whole case into His hands, and you will know the sweetness of being the friend of God.

3. Do you now ask, "But by what way does God in Christ reconcile sinners unto Himself?" See verse 19. It is by His "not imputing their trespasses unto them." At the school your trespass is imputed to you when you are blamed and punished for some fault. In the third address (page 36) we saw that a trespass is like a debt. To impute is to set down to one's account, or to hold one responsible for anything. When God pardons us,

He does not reckon our sins to our account. How is this? Verse 21 gives us the answer. Christ had no sin of His own, and we had no righteousness of our own. He takes our sin, and gives us back His righteousness. God sets our sin to His account, and He does for us all that needs to be done with it. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

The love of God and Christ in all this should melt the hardest hearts, and turn God's enemies into friends. Such pity should slay your enmity, and win you over to the side of God. Who among you can reject and scorn the love of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself? We pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, for we bring you—

III. The Word of Reconciliation.—But do you ask, "Is this word for me? Can I know that it is for my own self?" Yes, you can; for in my text the word and the world go together. If you are in the world—that's all—then the word must be for you. But do you say, "Is it only a word? Have you nothing more to shew us for it?" But is not this word enough? A Glasgow merchant sends word to a New York merchant to risk £100,000. The message is sent flashing through the heaving bosom of the mighty Atlantic, and comes out correct on the other side. It is written on a piece of plain paper, and taken

by a poor telegraph boy to the New York merchant. You can fancy him saying in a doubting mood, "Is this word all? Is there nothing more to shew for it than this bit of paper handed to me by this boy? Am I to venture my whole fortune on that?" But he remembers that there is a man behind the message: a man who is as good as his word, and never yet deceived him; and he makes the venture at once, and is safe. And what more do you need than the naked word of God? God is behind the word, and in the word. So never mind your frames or fears, but take the word of God, take God at His word, when He offers you pardon by Jesus Christ. His simple word is all you need.

And this word is a message: it is for every boy and girl by himself and herself, just as if God had nobody else to speak to. To every one I address, I can truly say, "I have a message from God to thee;" for, as I have said, His word is for everybody in the world. Richard Baxter used to say that the word "whosoever" encouraged him more than the word "Richard Baxter" would have done, had it been in the Bible. There had been more Richard Baxters than one in the world, and he could not have found out whether he was the Richard Baxter who was invited; but he was quite sure that the word "whosoever" took him in. I am as sure as I am of anything, that God means you when He says, "Be ye reconciled to God." Paul calls ministers ambassadors; and in the early ages they were called sacred heralds. Our Queen has ambassadors at foreign courts. They

are her servants, who carry her messages in her name, and by her authority. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Oh, how wonderful that God and Christ plead with you! They set a great value on your young heart. Your soul is far too good to be lost, far too good for the devil, the world, and the flesh to get the best of it. What pains they take to win you! God thinks you worth so much that He stoops to beseech you, as if He were asking a favour of you. Do you say *No*, or *Yes* to Him?

When the great war with Hannibal was breaking out, the Romans sent to Carthage to complain, and one of their ambassadors came before the Carthaginian Senate holding his cloak together as if he were carrying something in it: and he said, "I bring you peace or war; take which you like." The Carthaginians said, "Give us which you will." Then he shook his cloak open, and made a gesture as if he were throwing a bundle on the floor, and said, "I give you war." And the Carthaginians shouted and said, "So let it be." The Christian ambassador has a better message. He finds you at war, rebels in arms; and he brings you an offer of peace, and beseeches you to consent to its terms. He, the ambassador of the Prince of Peace, carries only heavenly peace in his bosom. His message brings "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill to man." In ancient history we meet another Roman

ambassador, who once carried offers of peace to the Carthaginian general. "Give me time to think about it," said the general. It was refused. "Give time at least," he asked again, "to consult with my generals." Again it was refused. The general then said, "Give me at least an hour." The ambassador drew with his rod a circle on the sand around the general, and said, "You shall not step over that circle without declaring peace or war with Rome." To the same effect, but in a different spirit, the apostle says, "Behold *now* is the accepted time." The king's message demands haste. No one crosses the door-step of this church to-day without being at peace, or at war with God.

This, then, is the word of reconciliation which I bring you. It is what Christ would say Himself, were He here to-day in the flesh. Oh, that I knew how to plead with you! All the difficulties on God's side have been taken away by Christ; the only difficulty now is in your heart. God the Father is willing; Christ the Saviour is willing; the Holy Ghost, who is moving your heart now, is willing; but are you yet willing? Do you really want to be at peace with God? Surely it is time this quarrel were ended: it cannot be ended too soon. You have had enough of it; you can gain nothing by it. Is sin so noble a thing that you can have done with it too soon? Can you make a better use of yourself than by giving your heart to God? Can you have God on your side too soon, Christ for your Friend, the good Spirit for your Guide too soon? Can you have the best

of blessings too soon? You cannot have them too soon ; but you may seek them too late. Therefore we pray you in Christ's stead, " be ye reconciled to God." For God's sake, who wishes you to be blest ; for Christ's sake, who came into the world to save sinners ; for the Spirit's sake, whom your sins grieve ; for your own sake ; for the sake of the church and the world, for which you could do so much—I beseech you, " Be ye reconciled to God."





XV.

The Holy Ghost.





FAMOUS painting of Christ on the cross had a wonderful power over all who saw it. It was so real and life-like that they felt as if Christ crucified were evidently set forth before their eyes. The painter was asked how he had managed to put so much feeling into the picture. "Ah!" he replied, "I painted it all on my knees." He painted in a prayerful spirit. Like Him, we should muse upon our present subject on the knees of our hearts; for we are to consider the Holy Ghost, who, with the Father and the Son, is God over all, blessed for ever. The very name should subdue, and bring a sort of awe over us. Holy Spirit, breathe upon our souls now, and new-create us for the service of our God. I have chosen one of the first of the many verses in the Bible that speak of the Spirit, for He is mentioned about three hundred times in the New Testament alone. "My Spirit," God says in Genesis vi. 3, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." This address has three parts—

I. The Spirit Striving.

II. Man Resisting.

III. Man Yielding.

Before the flood, the Spirit strove with all, but the people resisted, while Noah yielded. These three parts will give us, as in three chapters, the history of the Spirit's work in the heart of man.

I. The Spirit Striving.—Our text proves that the Spirit strives almost always with all men, even with those who are giants in sin. The words "not always" mean that. The Spirit takes no such Sabbath-rest as the Creator enjoyed. You ask, "But how does the Spirit strive?" Well, I hardly know where to begin with my answer. For the ever-busy Spirit of God visits the ever-busy spirit of man in ways we dream not of. He is like the wind which is constantly playing around us; now in the gentle breeze that fans the brow, and again with tones of thunder in the tempest. But we had better go to the Bible at once. There we learn that He strives with men chiefly about sin and the Saviour.

1. He strives as the *Reprover of Sin*. "And when He (the Spirit) is come, He will reprove the world of sin" (John xvi. 8), and chiefly of the sin of not believing on Christ. When conscience checks you for any sin, and makes you wish you had not done it; when you feel that you have not treated Christ as you should—that is the Spirit striving with you. And the Spirit

strives thus with the chief of sinners. I once lived in a village in which there were two notorious characters, whom I came to know. The one was a poor woman. Her neighbours didn't know her, she said. They fancied she had no thought of God ; but they were mistaken. Pointing to a little house, she told me that often in the dark winter nights she had stood at the window, shivering in the rain and snow, that she might hear the good Christian, who lived there, praying at family worship. She hoped that his prayers would do good to her bad heart. The other was a man who had often been in jail. One day he opened his heart to me in words like these : " You're not to think I'm content to live this way. Many is the strange thought of my own I have, especially on Sabbath days. I see my neighbours, with their nicely-dressed children, going past our road-end to the kirk, and I often wish to go with them. I wonder why they never speak to me about joining them. But they never heed me, just as if I was a beast, and not a man. I often think with David, ' No man cared for my soul.' " He spoke through his tears. The Spirit had been striving mightily for years with these two wild people. It would be as easy to find a man or woman with two heads, as to find one in this Christian land with whom God's Spirit has not striven as the Reprover of sin.

2. The Spirit also strives as the *Inviter to Christ*, and the *Revealer of Christ*. " The Spirit and the Bride say, Come ; " and as to when you are to come, " the Holy

Ghost saith, to-day ;" and Christ says, " He shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Often good desires spring up in you ; you wish you were good ; you wish you could live without the fear of death ; your heart is moved sometimes by the wondrous love of God and the Saviour ; some sweet text or hymn gives you a sense of Christ's matchless beauty ; sometimes you feel that it is sad and sinful not to follow Him. Ah, it is the Spirit gently striving, that He may draw you unto the Saviour !

Then the Spirit strives with men through God's providence. Let one case stand for all. A reckless sailor boy, who had run away from home, was one day sauntering down to his ship, which was then at anchor in a foreign harbour. He came to a corner where two roads met : the one going straight as an arrow to the ship, the other taking a round-about way. In a whim, as it seemed to him, he took the longer way. He had never done so before, nor had he any reason for doing so then, and he laughed at the oddness of his choice. But in that street he met for the first time the man who was the means of changing his whole life. He became a great preacher, and to his dying day believed that God's Spirit moved him to take the round-about road to his ship. Thus in thousands of unknown ways the Spirit strives with man ; and so strives with each of us, that, if any are not saved, the blame must be all their own.

II. Man Resisting the Spirit.—The Spirit could

not strive with man, unless man strove with the Spirit, for it takes two for a striving. If man did not resist, the Spirit would be known only as the heavenly Teacher, whom all gladly obeyed. But at the flood everybody opposed the Spirit, except Noah and his family. And Stephen, the first martyr, said to the Jews, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost ; as your fathers did, so do ye." You can easily fancy what sort of men they were in Noah's day—great giants in body, mind, and sin ; despising Noah and his warnings, making rare sport of the saint and his ark. Of course, none of you would be guilty of such bad behaviour. Yet I can believe that some of the giants did not openly resist Noah, and yet resisted the Holy Ghost. They were no scoffers, nor enemies of Noah ; but they did not care for his religion or his sermons. They would not be troubled about such things. An army may be resisted by soldiers ; but it also often meets with resistance from a mass of rock lying across the path. Engineers estimate its power of resistance, as they call it, and consider how they can overcome it. And so there are people who do not openly oppose what is good, while their thoughtless hearts are like a rock deeply rooted in the earth, and they are as successful resisters of the Spirit as the men who were drowned by the flood. If you often hear God's word, but never heed it ; if you wont think about good things ; if you always say that there will be time enough by-and-by, then you are resisting God's Spirit, though you are no liar, or swearer, or

scoffer. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit," the apostle says most touchingly, "whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Why grieve him? He is not your foe, but your best friend. A wayward son grieves his parents for many a day. They bear it in sorrow, and strive to win him back. But he waxes worse and worse. At last he becomes a man, takes his own way, does deeds of shame, and tries to poison his brothers. His father is then compelled in self-defence to give him up. He is sent off to America or Australia, and his books and portrait are laid out of sight, and his name is never mentioned but to God. Thus the men who perished in the flood so grieved the Spirit as to grieve Him away. Though He left them never to return, He was slow to leave them. He took farewell of them as the weeping Saviour took farewell of Jerusalem. "The long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah" one hundred and twenty years; but it did not wait for ever. The reason why the Spirit ceased to strive with them is stated in our verse, "for that he also is flesh." That means he is altogether flesh; his body has made the soul its slave; he has now no heart, no conscience, no holy desires. Sin has brought them to such a pass that they are all flesh and no spirit, all body and no soul. They are among those whom the apostle describes "as natural brute beasts." They care only for eating and drinking, and money-making, and merry-making. Not till they had gone such lengths in sin were they forsaken, and then they perished utterly. Pharaoh, King

Saul, King Herod, Judas, and others named in the Bible, seem to have been in the same sad case. We are now under the shadow of the darkest subject in the Bible, "the sin against the Holy Ghost," "the unpardonable sin." The thought of it makes us afraid. If we felt the sadness of the subject, we should speak of it as broken-hearted men. But be sure that you have not sinned that sin, if you have still any good desire, any fear of offending God, any wish to be a Christian. These are sure signs that the Spirit has not forsaken you. Remember that your Father giveth his Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, and pray with David, "Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." Let the terrors of this subject also warn you against resisting the Spirit.

"Behold ! a stranger at your door,
He gently knocks, has knocked before ;
Has waited long, is waiting still ;
You treat no other friend so ill.

Admit Him ere His anger burn,
His feet departed ne'er return ;
Admit Him, or the hour's at hand,
You'll at His gate rejected stand."

It will be a welcome relief to turn now to—

III. Man Yielding to the Spirit.—The difference between resisting and yielding is the difference between the giants perishing in the flood and Noah safe in the ark. You should yield as Noah yielded. He

yielded *once for all in conversion*, and *always in holy living*. We do not know the time when Noah yielded ; but, unless he was one of those who are sanctified from childhood, there was a time when his selfish will was conquered, and he gave himself to God. A soul is truly converted when he yields thus to the striving Spirit. Sometimes the struggle lasts for years. Many have described their feelings under it. Two men, as it were, wrestled in the same breast ; two wills fought against each other. The Spirit strove to conquer the heart. He used the terrors of the law and the sweet mercies of the gospel, that the man might be both driven and drawn to the Saviour. Often he was on the point of yielding ; he almost did it, yet did it not. He had his finger on the latch, and his foot on the threshold ; a single step would have brought him into the kingdom ; he had the one foot lifted to take it, and then drew back. Even Agrippa was in such a state when he confessed, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." A man lately thus described to me one of his companions : "His heart is touched, and he has given in so far ; but he has not just taken the jump yet. He's like the pendulum : sometimes he seems to be on the right side, and again he is on the wrong." A Kaffir chief, who had long been halting between two opinions, declared his decision to the missionary by saying, "I have now leapt the ravine." He had fairly yielded to the Spirit, who had long been pressing him to leap over the boundary between his idols and the Saviour. It



THE PRAIRIE FIRE.

would be a joy to me if I could help you to understand what true decision is ; and I will take from the Bible another illustration, which places before us another side of this yielding. Isaiah prophesies of Jesus, "He will not quench the smoking flax" (chap. xlii. 3) ; that is, the feeble, flickering wick in the lamp. Now, you have a good desire in your heart. It may be very faint, like the smoking flax, which gives out much smoke, but no clear flame. Still it is there. Thank God for it ; and thank God too that His Spirit strives to kindle it into a steady flame. But you may put out that spark of holy desire ; for the apostle says, "Quench not the Spirit." Watch that Indian. The prairie is all in a blaze, and the flame is roaring along towards him. His wife, children, and cattle are crouching around him. His only chance of life is to kindle a fire, burn the dry grass around, and plant them all on the spot the fire has blackened, as the prairie fire cannot reach them there. He tries to fire the grass two or three times, but he fails. He tries again, for it may soon be too late. His heart beats loudly with fear ; he strikes a spark ; he knows that his life lies in the life of that spark ; he bends over it, shelters it from the wind with his hands, cherishes it with his breath, and moves a dry rag near it. The red spark creeps round the rag ; it smokes, it bursts forth, it catches the grass. Thank God, they are saved ! If you have the slightest spark of a desire after Christ, it has come from heaven. It owes all its brightness to

God, and all its dulness to you. God wishes you not to quench it, but to do all you can to foster it. Do not weaken or neglect, I beseech you, that God-given spark ; for your soul's life may depend upon it. Bring it to Him who will not quench the smoking flax which He has Himself kindled.

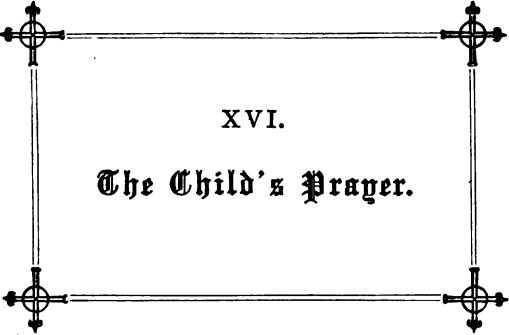
While Noah yielded once for all at his conversion, his whole life was a yielding to the Spirit. He was like soft clay in the hand of the heavenly Potter, who shaped him into a vessel fit for carrying the treasures of grace to men. So far as we know, he yielded always, except once when he drank strong drink, and made himself the scorn of fools. In our day as in Noah's, strong drink, more than any other outward thing, hinders men from yielding to the Spirit. It has the dreadful power of darkening all the soul, and making the heart unyielding. My advice to you about it is, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." If you take that advice, I am sure that you will never rue it. Don't think that you are in no danger ; for Noah, preacher of righteousness, and builder of the ark for 120 years, Noah—amid all the warnings of the flood, and fresh from a new covenant with God—even Noah was found lying drunk in his tent. Beware. But, with that one exception, he was a whole man on the side of God. He yielded always to the Spirit as his Guide, Enlightener, Comforter, and Sanctifier. We must yield wholly and gladly. A clever Fiji chief, who was a great politician, died lately. "My right hand is Wesleyan," he used to say, "my left hand is the Pope's, and all the

rest of my body belongs to the idols." In the service of Christ you cannot cut and carve as he did ; you must yield all or nothing. And it is easy to yield all when the heart has been lovingly yielded. It may seem very hard to do all a Christian should. But you must remember that he gets a new nature ; and the new life is as natural and pleasant for the new nature as the old life was for the old nature. It is misery and death for a fish to breathe on dry land ; but give the fish the nature of a bird, and it will rejoice in the sunshine. Dr Livingstone's Nassick boys and Johanna men were always complaining, and at last deserted, while he gladly pushed on in spite of disease. He and they had the very same work, only it was much easier to them than to him ; but his heart was in it, while theirs was not ; and that made all the difference. What a grief if you were forced from your snug homes to spend a winter in the Arctic regions ! But many rich men have been glad and proud to do so ; and many more who were not chosen for the expeditions were sorely disappointed. For they had a heart for these bold enterprises. They were smitten with the desire of fame, and of grand discoveries. Now the new life would be like a winter in Greenland, if you had to live it with the old nature. But the Spirit gives us a taste for it, and joy in it, so that we prefer it to any other, and choose it as the only life worth having. The Spirit writes God's laws in the heart, and then duty is changed into delight.

My last word is *yield*—yield to the striving Spirit.

Why not ? Why should you hold out any longer ? Can you ever make a better use of yourself than by giving all to God ? Will you strive against your Maker ? Cease your strange struggle with the Spirit, for you conquer only when you are conquered. Yield, then, once for all ; and yield always. God bless you with a yielding heart !





XVI.

The Child's Prayer.





ONE evening a friend was giving me some beautiful specimens of Bible explanation. Among others, he gave me, just in a minute or two, the heads of a sermon he once heard upon the Lord's Prayer. I at once said, "Well, that's a perfect gem. I wonder that I did not find it out myself." What he said was something like this :—The Lord's Prayer takes up all the relations in which we stand to God. The Christian prays as—

I. A Child from Home :

Our Father who art in heaven.

II. A Worshipper :

Hallowed be Thy name.

III. A Subject :

Thy kingdom come.

IV. A Servant :

Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

V. A Beggar :

Give us this day our daily bread.

VI. A Sinner :

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them
that trespass against us.

VII. A Sinner amid Temptation and Evil :

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil.

Three reasons are added—

1. *Do this, Lord, for it will help on Thy kingdom :*
For Thine is the kingdom.
2. *Do it, Lord, for Thou art able :*
For Thine is the power.
3. *Do it, Lord, for it shall be for Thy glory :*
For Thine is the glory, for ever. Amen.

Some psalms are called psalms of degrees, as they were sung by the pilgrims at the stages on the road up to Jerusalem. The Lord's Prayer is a prayer of degrees, but of degrees downwards. It begins with the highest of our relations, and comes down, step by step, to the lowest. Like Jacob's ladder, its top is in heaven and its foot on earth, at the gate of hell. It has the whole circle of our duties, wants, and desires. Of its ten parts, the first four have to do with God, and the next three with man, while the last three parts turn again to God, and give Him all the glory. Remember this explanation—you can easily do it—and you will perhaps understand better than ever these wonderful words, which are used oftener than any other words in the English language.

The Christian prays as—

I. A Child.—This is the highest of our relations. Heaven and earth know no tie nearer or dearer than that between father and child. For Jesus Himself is the Son, and "Father" is His name for God. When Paul rises to the highest height of our blessedness, it is sonship that fills his soul. Sinners saved by grace are not merely pardoned and then let off, or let alone: they become God's people, His servants; and much more, sons and joint-heirs with Christ. But to which of the angels has God said at any time, Thou art my son? The Christian does not think that God is a distant and dreadful Being, merely the Lawgiver, the Judge, the Avenger; but in Christ he draws near to the throne of grace, and cries, "Abba Father." He draws near with holy confidence, for he is guided by his Father's will, and knows his Father's heart. Be not discouraged that you are only a child; do not think that you could pray better if you were full grown. A child's spirit is the spirit of true prayer. Men and women pray truly only when they pray in the childhood of the heart. God's kingdom is in child-like hearts. Christ teaches us to say, not *my* Father, but *our* Father. He wishes us to be not solitary and selfish, but social in our prayers; for if our hearts go up in prayer to God, they must go out in warm affection to all His "dear children." Every child of God has a family feeling: he prays with and for all in God's great

family. Being loved much, he loves much, and he loves many.

And you pray with holy reverence as a child from home. He is in heaveu, and you are on earth. As mercy and majesty are united in Him, so fear and love are united in your heart. A child's home is his father's house; and so a Christian sings: "Heaven is my fatherland, heaven is my home." Earth is not your true home, but your lodging-house. You are a pilgrim here, a tenant at will, who may soon get notice to quit. In heaven, too, are your loved ones whom death took from you, and your cherished thoughts of whom will never die. Earth is poorer, and heaven more home-like to you since they went there. Perhaps the better part of your earthly home is already in heaven.

II. As a Worshipper you pray, "Hallowed be Thy name."—The noblest place is the child's, and the next noblest the worshipper's. Angels have not the first place, but only the second; they are worshippers, not children. Every child must wish his Father's name to be hallowed; that is, to be treated as holy, to be loved and revered by all men. How passing strange that nothing is more dishonoured than the name of the God of love, the Giver of every good gift! Oh, how many swearers there are among us! The other day I stood admiring the splendid crop in the harvest-field; but how wicked and unthankful were the harvesters! Their mouths were an open sepulchre; for, though up to the

ears in God's bounty, both men and women were uttering the most horrid oaths. It is sad, and hardly to be borne, that men should take the name of God in vain, and in so many ways keep from Him the homage that is His due.

III. The worshipping child is also a Subject, and so prays, "Thy kingdom come."—There are many sorts of subjects. Some are rebels at heart, and only yield to the law because they must; they are subjects by necessity, and not by choice. But others are loving and loyal subjects, who would not belong to another king if they could, and are much concerned about the honour and prosperity of their kingdom. He who has the spirit of this third petition is a loving and loyal subject of King Jesus, eager for His fame, and longing for the day when His kingdom shall fill the whole earth. He sees but two kingdoms that stand face to face like armies in the day of battle: the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of darkness and death. He hates the kingdom of Satan, and wishes it laid in ruins; but he loves the kingdom of Jesus, does all he can to take every hindrance to it out of the way, rejoices in every addition to it, and has a warm heart for all who are in it, and try to spread it. This is a missionary prayer; and every one who uses it rightly is a missionary at heart. Every real Christian is by his second birth a born missionary. He cannot be satisfied with the bad state of the world, and he tries by praying and working

to mend it. He is the friend of all mankind, and he believes firmly that nothing but Christ's kingdom can make men truly blest. So he prays that the Gospel may prosper where it is, and be sent where it is not.

IV. He also prays as a **Servant**, "Thy will be done."—He wishes it to be done universally—"Thy will (all of it) be done on earth"—all of it. A servant he is, too, aiming at perfect service, "as it is done in heaven." Every petition, you see, brings us a step lower down. A servant is lower than a subject. Our dukes are the subjects of the Queen, but not her servants; they obey her laws, but do not her work. Yet service may be the highest honour. *Ich dien*—I serve—is a kingly motto. Nearly all the officers in our Queen's household are of noble birth, and they have their titles from the commonest pieces of work. A lady-in-waiting is just as a servant-girl to the Queen; an equerry is a groom. It is the proud boast of some of our gentry that it is their part to hold the sovereign's horse or stirrup, or do the humblest service to her when she visits Scotland. Such small service is thought to be ennobled, and ennobling, because it is done to the Queen in person. And what a lofty privilege it is to do service to the King of kings. No wonder the title of a Christian in the early ages was a servant or bond-slave of Jesus Christ. You must desire that God's will be done on earth perfectly, "as it is done in heaven," where saints in glory are even as the angels.

And how is God's will done by the angels? This question was once put to a Sabbath-school class, and the best answer given was: "They do it without asking any questions." They do it with the whole heart, and with lightning's speed; they never find fault with it; they never shew any self-will; they are never weighed down with dull, heavy bodies; nor are they fretted with shortcomings. Zeal for God's will makes them as flames of fire in His service. Often angels have come to earth to do God's will. Notice how they did it. What ease! what speed! what perfection! what humility! These ministers of God, who make all God's will their pleasure, are never proud of their doings. They never wait to admire themselves, or get praise from man, but hurry back to God, to whom they give all the glory. Every Christian, whether in serving or suffering, wishes to do God's will in that way. Or rather, he wishes to be like the heavenly Servant, of whom it is written in the volume of the book, "Lo! I come. . . . I delight to do thy will, O my God; Yea, Thy law is within my heart." He does not pray that God's will may be done in heaven, for he knows that it is done perfectly there; but he prays that heaven may be the model of earth. And with all his might he strives to make earth the heaven he prays it may imitate. His heart's desire is that earth may be like heaven, and man like God.

These four petitions look unto God, as the next three look unto man. We should first seek to be right with God, and then we shall easily be put right in everything.

Of the three petitions I have yet to explain, one has to do with the body, and the other two with the soul.

V. You pray as a Beggar, not as one who is in straits only now and then, but as one who begs daily for daily bread, "Give us this day our daily bread."—You pray about your common food, for nothing belonging to the child is uninteresting to the heavenly Father. You do not think that you owe your food to your earthly father only ; but above him you see your Father in heaven, of whom he is the representative. You do not believe that daily bread comes to you simply by good luck, or as a matter of course ; but you lift your heart to Him whose liberality feeds man and beast. People often wonder how London is supplied every day with such an 'article as milk ; but it is infinitely more wonderful how God provides food for the whole family of mankind. Every year at harvest-time the world is within a few weeks of starvation ; but the new crop is always ready before the old has been eaten up. This spirit will make you like the Christians at Pentecost, who "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." It will make your food like the manna, fresh from heaven every morning, and sweeter far than the bread that is not sanctified by faith and prayer. "Why," asked a governess of her little girl, "do we pray God to give us our *daily* bread ? Why don't we ask it for four days, or a week ?" "Because we want it fresh," replied the child.

This modest petition also teaches us not to be over-careful about the future, or to set our hearts on riches and luxuries. It shews that we should be quite content with simple, homely food. It is a very bad sign when anybody makes a great ado about what he eats and drinks. They are by far the healthiest and happiest, both in soul and body, who, like Daniel and his companions, prefer plain food to costly luxuries. None enjoy life so thoroughly as they.

The last two petitions are on behalf of the soul. For to be delivered from sin, its guilt and power, that should be the great concern of everybody.

VI. You pray therefore as a Sinner : "And forgive us our trespasses."—The prayer here leads us down to a lower place than the beggar's. We might think that the beggar is at the very bottom of the ladder ; but the forgiven beggar on the dunghill is greater in the sight of God than the unforgiven king on the throne. The only way to get rid of our sins is by God forgiving them. We must confess and forsake our sins, and ask God to forgive them for the sake of Christ. For the Giver of daily bread is also the great Forgiver. When Luther's soul was crushed by the thought of his sins, he got great consolation from these words : "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." "Ah !" said he, "it is not enough to believe that the sins of David or of Peter are forgiven ; the devils believe that. The commandment of God is that we believe our own sins forgiven."

Some strange people believe that, after they have trusted in Christ, they have no sins for which they should ask forgiveness. Our Lord has made no prayer for them. This prayer is for all Christ's disciples, and teaches every one of them to pray for daily pardon, no less than for daily bread. A sinner yourself, you are in a world where all are sinners, and sin against both each other and God ; and you are to forgive them as you hope to be forgiven—"forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." The stress lies on the word *as*. In Matthew vi. 15, our Saviour singles out the petition, and says : "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses;" and in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the parables He insists upon this point again and again. Forgiveness and forgivingness must go together. The forgiven must be a forgiving soul. He who has Christ's pardon must also have Christ's Spirit. There are many reasons for this. One is, that a heart full of revenge and ill-will cannot believe in a forgiving God. When Lord Napier sent home news of the death of King Theodore of Abyssinia, he said beautifully : "Theodore, who never shewed mercy to others, distrusted the offer of mercy held out to him, and died by his own hand." He naturally thought that others would be just like himself. Blessed are the forgiving, for they can fully believe in forgiveness. Yet that *as* is a very hard word. A church father tells that in his day many left out the second half of this petition ; and I have

heard people altering it thus, "As we *would* forgive them that trespass against us." An old border chief was once burning with the desire of revenge on his neighbours, who had insulted him, as he thought. All his retainers stood armed in the castle yard, ready for the fray. The chaplain was doing his best to change the chief's mind, but the proud warrior would not yield. "Well," said the chaplain, who had great influence over him, "if your lordship will go, let us kneel down and pray. You will repeat the prayers after me." The two knelt, and the chaplain began the Lord's prayer. The chief repeated the petitions till he came to this one—"forgive us our trespasses *as*;" but that little word *as* stuck in his throat. The chaplain seized the opportunity, and reminded him that he could not expect God's forgiveness unless he was ready to forgive his neighbours. After a sore struggle the chief repeated, "as we forgive them that trespass against us." He had gained that victory in which he was both the conquered and the conqueror. He rose from his knees, and sent his armed men home in peace. Oh, what a happy world this would be were every nation and government, every man, woman, and child to cherish the spirit of this prayer! When you offer up this prayer, see that you are "kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

VII. In the last petition you pray as one greatly Tempted, "And lead us not into temptation, but

deliver us from evil."—As past sin has been forgiven, you have only one great fear left : and that is the fear of temptation and evil. The darkest cloud over your future is not the battle of life, nor sickness, nor want, nor even death, but the fear of falling into hated sin. But the dark cloud has a silver lining, and is relieved by the rainbow of promised guidance. He whose mercy has pardoned the past, will surely give grace to help in days to come. The common notion seems to be that earth is midway between heaven and hell, heaven being above us, and hell beneath. And morally, if not geographically, there is truth in the notion. For heaven and hell meet on earth, as two armies meet on the battle-field. Thus earth lies both at the gate of heaven and at the gate of hell. Thus evil, or as some think the word means, the Evil One, is always near us. Earth is a haunted place. You are not safe in it unless you have God for your guide.

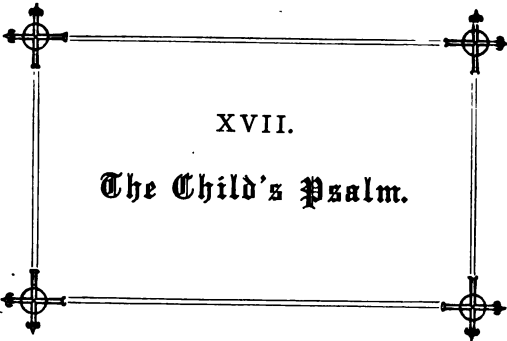
When we pray, "lead us not into temptation," we ask God to keep us out of circumstances where, through our own weakness, we might fall into sin. For, "let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God." We pray because we know that God hates all evil, and is ready to deliver us from the Evil One. Paul glories in this when he says, "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

We have the best reasons for believing that our Father will give what He has taught us to ask, for our

Lord puts three strong pleas into our mouth: "For Thine is the kingdom"—the blessings I ask will not make Thy kingdom less, but greater. It is *the* kingdom, the kingdom of kingdoms: it shall endure when all others have perished; and if Thou answerest me, I shall live in it for ever to Thy praise. "And (Thine is) the power"—grant my requests, Lord, for Thou art able; let it not appear as if Satan were stronger than Thou. "And (Thine is) the glory"—do it, Lord, for while mine shall be all the good, Thine shall be all the glory, for ever. Amen. Amen means certainly, truly, surely. It is a word of quietness and confidence. It reminds us that all God-given prayers are, like the promises, "Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus."

The last words of the Lord's Prayer form a doxology, that is, a giving of glory to God. All true prayers, like the Lord's Prayer, rise into praise. All that is here asked will be granted, and then this prayer on earth will be set to music as a song of praise in heaven. The brightly-shining throng around the throne of God in heaven will be able to sing, "Our Father, Thy name is now hallowed. Thy kingdom is come. Thy will is done on earth and heaven, which now are one. Thou hast given us our daily bread for eternity's nightless, endless day. Thou hast forgiven us all our sins: we have no longer sins to be forgiven, or sinners to forgive. Thou hast for ever delivered us from temptation and evil. And Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. Hallelujah."





XVII.

The Child's Psalm.





MY DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,—I wish you all a happy New Year.* I cannot give you it, else I gladly would ; but I can tell you how to get it ; and I can pray that it may be yours. For God, “who will have all men to be saved,” wishes you a happy new year ; so does the Saviour ; and so does the ever-blessed Spirit. Therefore you may have a happy new year, if you really wish it.

But *happy*, as most folks use it, is not the best word. A *good* new year is better. But the favourite word in the Bible is *blessed*. Happiness is often a light and short-lived thing, like the laughter of fools, or the crackling of thorns under a pot. It depends, as the word shews, on your *hap*, or what happens, or comes to you from without : it has to do with the body rather than with the soul. But blessedness is grand, and never-ending. It is to happiness what the deep river, flowing on for ever, is to the babbling brook, that fails in summer. When I wish you a happy new year,

* Preached on first Sabbath of the year.

I mean a blessed new year, which will lead you into a happy life, and a happy eternity. The desires for others, which God gives us, cannot be satisfied with any new year's wish short of that with which we close our service, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen."

I have chosen the twenty-third Psalm for to-day, because it is the child's psalm, and the new year's psalm. There is no other psalm or song in the world which so many children know. And may the prayers of your mother, on whose knees you first learnt it, be answered this day.

We have at the beginning of the psalm the secret of a happy life, vers. 1-3 ; in the middle, of a happy death, ver. 4 ; and at the close, of a happy eternity. King David gives us this three-fold secret in three illustrations. The psalm has three pairs of verses, and each pair contains an illustration, while each verse has an application of that illustration.

I. Jehovah is my Shepherd (vers. 1 and 2).

1. Be in His Fold (ver. 1).
2. Keep near the Shepherd (ver. 2).

II. Jehovah is my Guide (vers. 3 and 4).

1. In life (ver. 3).
2. In death (ver. 4).

III. Jehovah is my Entertainer (vers. 5 and 6).

1. He is so now (ver. 5).
2. He shall be so for ever (ver. 6).

We do not divide, we only distinguish, David's three illustrations ; for it is the Shepherd who guides, and it is the Shepherd-guide who entertains. They favour us with three views of Jehovah, who is his trusted Shepherd, his sure Guide, and his bountiful Entertainer.

I. My Shepherd.—"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," so sings David, who in his youth was a sunburnt shepherd-boy. The psalm was written probably in old age, when, as all old folks do, he turned with delight to the bright days of boyhood. He knew right well the shepherd's heart. There is a very great difference, you know, between the shepherds in the East and our shepherds. David had to risk his life in defending his sheep from the lion and the bear. A strong affection, like the love of dear friends, unites the Eastern shepherd and his sheep. David was ever ready to do all in his power for his helpless sheep. Had his power been equal to his love, not one of his sheep should ever have wanted. And from his own shepherd-heart he rises, in his reasonings, to the heart of the Great Shepherd of his soul. Jehovah's power is equal to His love : I am one of His sheep ; therefore I shall not want. Jehovah's care for His sheep cannot be less than I had in my shepherd-days for mine. I know a glen which was visited some years ago with a gracious revival. At one of the prayer-meetings, a shepherd told how a little starving lamb, whose mother had died, ran to him, fell upon its knees, and eagerly sucked his shoe-ties. He

was filled with pity, put the little thing into his bosom, covered it with his plaid, took it home, and fed it. Then, with much feeling and beauty, he asked those who were seeking Christ in fear, whether they could believe that the Good Shepherd, who had given His life for the sheep, would have less pity for the penitents who cast themselves at His feet imploring help. The appeal told. It was the very argument of David. Notice what David does not say, as well as what he does say. He does not say, I shall not want for my soul, but only I shall not want. No good thing for soul or body, for time or eternity, shall my Shepherd withhold from me.

The first two verses reveal the secret of true happiness. It is to be *in the fold, and near the Shepherd*. You must first be in the fold, and able to say, "the Lord is my Shepherd." Our shepherds say that no creature is more wretched than a strayed sheep. But think of a lost sheep in the East. Alone among the burning sands of the desert; no grass; no shade; no water; clogged and wounded with thorns; in the thicket hard by the yelp of the wolf, and the roaring of the lion. Its misery is complete. And such is the Christless soul in days of trial. For him there is no ear for prayer, no heart to pity, no hand to help, no hope for the future. No wonder that some who have no faith in Christ, have, even in our own day, agreed with the old heathen who said that the greatest blessing was not to have been born at all, and the next greatest, to die as soon as possible. Be sure that you can find true happiness only

in the fold. But you must also keep near the Shepherd (ver. 2), for He is always in the centre of the richest pasture. Some sheep in the East always keep close to the shepherd, and these are the best cared for. He often plucks for them handfulls of sweet grass, which are never given to the stragglers, that follow afar off. So it is not enough to be in the fold, unless you are also near the Shepherd. "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee," is a good prayer for the new year. In all the world you cannot find a more perfect picture of perfect blessedness than that in the second verse. An oasis in the desert where the sheep rest; the shepherd with them, and making them lie down; the pastures are green, not bare or parched, but nourishing, and most refreshing to the wearied eye; the waters are still, not stagnant, not dangerous torrents, but softly murmuring streams; and the trees planted by the waters afford a reviving shade. Nothing is wanting to complete their enjoyment. And behold in that what they enjoy who are near the Good Shepherd. Seven times blessed are you, if you are in such a case.

II. Jehovah is **My Guide**.—The words, "He restoreth my soul," make a bridge between the first and second pair of verses. My Shepherd-guide makes me strong for all the way that lies before me. Whatever dangers may compass me, I shall be safe, and speed well, if I just put my hand in His, and follow on. The third verse declares what my Guide does for me *in life*,

and the fourth verse, *in death*. Through life "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." In the forests of Africa there is no end of cross-roads and bye-paths; but the Africans fell trees, and lay them across all the bye-paths, leaving only the main route clear. My path is through such a tangled forest; but the Bible lays its commands and warnings across all crooked ways; and when cross-roads meet, the Spirit whispers to the prayerful soul, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Thus God leads us in paths of righteousness right on to the land of the upright. And He does all for His name's sake. It is not for the sake of my merit, or my holiness. As far as east is from the west, so far was such an idea from the mind of David. He who guides me through life, says David, will not desert me at death—"through the valley of the shadow of death. . . . Thou art with me." The shepherd had often to lead his sheep at night through gloomy and dangerous ravines, where rocks might crush, or wild beasts attack them. The panting sheep—no creature more timid in the dark—crowded close to the shepherd, who with an encouraging word touched them with his staff, and then they feared no evil. The rod and staff are the shepherd's weapons, with which he smites robbers and unruly sheep; but, as one has beautifully said, "His ensigns of authority are also instruments of consolation." David knew that in all his dark days, and especially in the day of death, the Shepherd of men would be with him; and so he faced the future without fear.

How sad it is to die without faith in the Saviour ; to go through the strange valley into the great hereafter without one ray of hope or light ! It is none the less sad when the dying have no fear. Two well-known Glasgow merchants—the one an infidel, and the other a Christian—were strolling together one summer's day, and came to a country churchyard. They had been comparing their views about the future. "I have the better of you here," said the infidel, "I have no fear of death." "But have you any hope?" he was asked, and made reply, "No, I have neither hope nor fear." "Do you see that bullock?" said his neighbour, pointing to a fat beast under a tree, sleepily chewing his cud. "You are exactly on a level with him : he, too, has neither hope nor fear about the future." When a certain rich man was told by the doctor that he had but a short time to prepare for death, he ordered his servant to bring in his hunting dogs, and put them into his bed. He died among his dogs, even as a dog dieth. Poor man, his happiest days had been spent with his dogs, and he turned to them for comfort in his dying hour. How different is the death-bed of this psalm. The Christian is ready, for his Shepherd has prepared him for all He has prepared for him. He is like a departed girl of whom her father said to me, "her feet were shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." He walks ; he does not stand still through fright, nor does he run as if urged on by fear. He walks through the valley ; through it into the light of eternal day. It is but "the shadow of

death ;" for him the reality of death has been taken away by Jesus Christ. Many die often through fear of death ; but he is delivered from that fear. He fears no evil in death, which to him is the gate of eternal life.

We know much more about the Good Shepherd than David did. We know far better than he could the full meaning of his own words ; for Christ has now abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. Thus the psalm speaks to us of David's Son and Lord. Hence many of our loved ones had its words on their lips as they fainted in death. Sometimes a smile is seen on the faces of the dying. Perhaps they are returning the smile of their Shepherd, whose rod and staff comfort them : perhaps they smile as children smile when they feel the gentle touch of the hand that upholds and guides them.

We have all naturally a great horror of death, which our psalm should help us to conquer. Many through fear of death are all their life-time in bondage. But faith has lifted many above every such fear. "If this is the dark valley," said a dying missionary, "it has not a dark spot in it ; all is light." Professor George Wilson once wrote, "I am resigned to life. I do not deserve to die." And another has said, "Life has not a true joy but what death improves ; nor has life any bliss till death can give a greater." Now the faith that gives a happy death is the only faith that can give a happy life. They only know all the sweetness of life who are not afraid to die. That man must have had a happy life

who, when the floor of Richmond Court-house gave way, shouted in tones heard above the crash of the timbers, "O death, where is thy sting?" We can call no life happy if it does not end happily; and every Christian life ends happily, even though it should have no outward sign of joy. Ah, when we come to the gate of death, our friends cannot convoy us, or lend a helping hand: they can only stand outside, and weep, and wonder, and pray. "Oh, it is dark!" said a dying child, "I want my father to come with me." She was told that he could not. "Then I want my mother." "I cannot go with you, my darling," the mother said, "but Jesus, the Good Shepherd, will go with you." The dying child who knows this truth can say—

"Once I thought I could not leave you,
Once I was afraid to die;
Now I feel 'tis Jesus calls me
To His mansion in the sky."

Be in His fold, and keep near Him; and you may then sing the boldest song ever sung, "This mortal must put on immortality. Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. My Shepherd-guide is also My Entertainer.—He has been, is now, and ever shall be, my Host. David once fled from Saul to the cave Adullam, and lived in a stronghold there. Many who were in distress

fled to him. The moment they were under his roof, David was bound by all the laws of hospitality to defend them. You can fancy their foes standing on some neighbouring height, while David, full in their view, prepares a table for his guests under the spreading oak, anoints them with oil in token of honour, and fills their cup till it runs over. The foes can only gnash their teeth, and go away. Thus Jehovah brings His friends into His banqueting-house, where His banner over them is love. Under His protection His guest is both safe and satisfied : "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies ; Thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth over " (ver. 5). How delicious, how refreshing the cool, sweet-smelling oil was to the wearied wayfarer ! How agreeable to him the plentiful feast, and the overflowing cup ! David proved life to be such a feast to the man of God. Some think or say that the Christian's life must be joyless. They hint that he has no taste for true enjoyment, and that his heart is like a standing pool. The godly life was to David—and he knew both ways of living—an abundant royal feast. The thought of it fills him with thankful joy.

Thoughtless people have their feasts too. Their Master spreads a table for them, and puts a brimming cup to their lips. But do their joys last ? When Venice was united to Italy, a grand ball was given to Victor Emmanuel. A writer who was present was startled, on going into a passage, to discover that the

dark and silent sea lay all around the gay hall of pleasure, and that a coffin-like boat was waiting to convey one of the glittering throng into silence and darkness. So a cold sea surrounds the gay company of the ungodly, and death's bark waits to carry them over to the near, though forgotten shores of eternity. Or the jovial company is like that in Belshazzar's palace, drinking wine out of golden vessels, and praising their gods. But lo, when their mirth is fast and furious, a mysterious hand writes their doom on the wall overhead. Then their countenances are changed, the joints of their loins are loosed, and their knees smite one against another. It is not so with Jehovah's guest. He sits fearlessly at the banquet divine love has spread for him. To this banquet you are invited as much as any one under heaven. *Come, Come*, echoes through the whole Bible. You cannot say *No* to so kind an invitation to this splendid entertainment.

How does David look forward to the future? See verse sixth: "Surely"—his faith in God makes him quite sure of it—"goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." His two guardian angels will not leave him till they land him in his Father's house, where he shall be not merely a guest, but a son that abideth ever: "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

We should sit down at the gate of another year, and question ourselves about the use we mean to make of it.

We should begin the new year with new yearnings after the life celebrated in David's song. If we do so, it will be a new year in more than the name ; for, by God's help, we will then put away our old sins, and make new efforts after holy living. We cannot tell what this year may bring us. If we knew its trials, separations, and deaths, tenderness would now subdue our hearts, and our warmest affections would be drawn out to one another. But take Jehovah-Jesus as your Shepherd, Guide, and Host ; and then, come what may, all will be well.

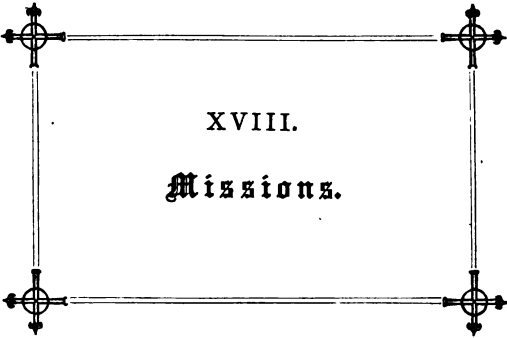
How sad it must be to look back upon an ill-spent life. A godless old man, of whom I was reading, was often overheard by his successor muttering, "Oh, that God would give me back my wasted years." A dying man, who had been an evil liver, exclaimed on his death-bed, "I wish that I could gather up all my influence, and bury it with me in the grave." Look now on the other side of the picture. I lately visited Dr Ingram of Unst in Shetland, the oldest man in the possession of his faculties with whom I ever conversed. He was in his one hundredth year. The memory of the aged travels in a circle, so that the nearer they are to the end, the nearer they are to the beginning. He remembered well only his Bible and his boyhood, and the fact that goodness and mercy had followed him all the days of his life. A more cheerful or thankful man I never saw. When we left, he lifted up his hands and blessed us, after the manner of the patriarchs in Genesis.

He told us that if we should live to be as old men as he was, he could hardly wish more for us than that we might have as much enjoyment of life as God had given him. He owed it all, he said, to the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ, which he had preached for nearly seventy-five years. He then repeated—and one of his family said that it was his theme every day, morning, noon, and night—he repeated these lines—

“ Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me ;
And in God’s house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.”







XVIII.

Missions.





QF the prayers of David the son of Jesse, one of the best known is found in the 67th Psalm :
“ God be merciful unto us, and bless us ; and cause His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations.”
That prayer gives us a map of our mission-field. Will you join me in carefully examining it ? It spreads itself out before my eye as a wide circle : we shall start from its centre, and travel outwards to its circumference. The whole circle is made up of four circles, which are different from each other, though often you can hardly tell where the one ends and the other begins, and though the four, like the circles on the map of the world, make one rounded whole. These are—

I. Our Heart,

II. Our Home,

III. Our Neighbourhood.

IV. The World.

As this is a missionary address, I will give the most time to the last two parts of the subject.

Our starting-point, then, is the centre of this growing circle—

I. Our Heart.—All true mission-work begins at home, and nothing is so near home as your own heart. Thus the mission prayer runs, “God be merciful unto *us*, and bless *us*.” The wonderful little mission-field within you is like the great mission-field without : it may easily become a stronghold of heathenism : a great work needs to be done in it. And this work can be done, not by your own might, or merit, but by God’s mercy. Your first and last cry must be for mercy : “God be merciful unto me a sinner.” They who believe and feel the mercy of God in Christ, they only can do the work of God. In midwinter ships often fail to reach the Canadian coast. The sailors are often benumbed by the intense cold, their hands and feet frostbitten, and the very sails and ropes so frozen that they cannot be moved. In such a case they turn right round, and make for the warm gulf stream, which flows through the sea in that region. On reaching it they pass at one bound from winter to spring. They bathe their frozen hands and feet in the genial waters, icicles fall upon the deck from the crackling sails, and the revived sailors receive fresh heart and hope, in the strength of which they soon reach the shore. Like them, you have a difficult work before you ; like them, you must be warmed

into fresh life before you can do it ; but unlike them, you need never leave the stream that makes you glad, for you may always keep yourself in the love of God. "Continue ye in my love," our Saviour says to all His people. Oh, when the wondrous mercy of God to you is believed as a reality, it enters your soul, and goes through you with the swiftness and ease of light and heat ; and then you gladly begin the mission for which God has sent you into this world.

We are also to pray, "God cause His face to shine upon us." Words like these are often found in the Bible : what exactly do they mean ? I once saw an assembly of some twelve thousand people, who had met to welcome a favourite princess. When she appeared, hearty goodwill caused thousands of faces to shine upon her. Every face shone as if brilliantly lighted up from within. The radiance of that sea of faces, a radiance all borrowed from the heart, was one of the most beautiful sights I have seen. These people loved the royal visitor before ; she knew beforehand, I daresay, that they loved her ; but not till that hour did she see and feel the fullness of their love. Each shining face was the mirror of a loving heart. The Christian knows that, like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth him, yet his chief desire is that the love in God's heart would appear, as it were, in His face, and so conquer all his doubts, and beget love in return. Thus God's mission-work prospers in our heart of hearts, and soon spreads through—

II. Our Home.—Our Saviour likens the kingdom of heaven to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. The leaven is not on, but in the meal, placed in the centre of it ; it spreads through and through it, and then it passes over from the leavened meal into other meal lying near it. The leaven has force to change all the meal it touches. Thus God's grace, when it is not hindered, begins in the inmost heart, and works from within outwards, leavening first the life at home. Home is certainly meant, though not mentioned in our prayer. "God bless *us*," not me : it is the prayer of one who is not solitary, but planted in a family. He who prays for all men must specially embrace those who are nearest and dearest to him. God has given you a mission of your own, which He has given to no one else. It is to do what you can to make your home holy and happy. The Bible is a very homely book, for it says much about home-duties. It tells you that before you can do anything else well, "you must first learn to shew piety at home." You sometimes sing of "home, sweet home," but it is the folks in it, young and old, who make home sweet. If they are not sweet, home often becomes only a house less loved than the house of strangers. Often one boy or girl can make a home happy or wretched ; can fill it with sunshine, or overshadow it with a cloud. Now God's grace should take away from you every bitter thing, and make you one of the best of sons or daughters, of brothers or sisters ; one of God's best gifts to your

family. I remember visiting a sick Sabbath-school girl, who lived with her mother in one of the humblest homes. The mother, whose sins had made her an out-cast, stood by the bedside weeping. I could hardly have believed that there were so many tears in any fountain as came through her two eyes. "Pray that God won't take away my little lassie," she said. "I'm sure He sent her as a good angel to me. I forgot all that was good till she began to sing her little hymns to me, and tell me what she heard at the school. I fear that if she's not with me, I will go back to my old bad ways." God had blest that girl, and caused His face to shine upon her, so that His way and saving health were known also by her mother. His grace in her heart widened till it had filled her home also.

From our home we pass on to the larger circle of—

III. Our Neighbourhood and our nation.— Every Christian must have the mission spirit ; for it is the very spirit of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This earth was a dark spot in God's bright universe, a sort of out-field overrun with weeds ; but it is also heaven's mission-field. Some old writer has said that "God had only one Son, and He made Him a missionary." Our Saviour came from heaven to seek and save the lost, and the blessed Spirit is ever following wanderers, that He may win them into the fold. Then the Bible is from beginning to end a missionary book. The most glowing passages in the Old Testament are

those which foretell the spread of the gospel among all nations. For instance, the hope of the conversion of the whole world is the soul of this sixty-seventh psalm. The four Gospels describe Christ's mission work on earth, of which the last act was to send forth His disciples as missionaries. The Acts of the Apostles are a home and foreign mission record. The Apostle Paul was a missionary, and all his epistles but one were written chiefly to mission converts. This idea, then, should sink deeply into your hearts, that every Christian must have some share of the mission spirit. Like David, he must ask God to bless him, in order that he may become a blessing to others. And every Christian should be also a lover of his country. Who was ever more loyal to his country under sore temptation than Joseph, or Moses, or David? Who ever loved his stricken and bleeding country better than Jeremiah or Paul? The great Apostle, when the Jews were persecuting him to death, spoke fondly of them as "mine own nation"; and declared that he was ready to suffer anything, if he might only do them good. And when our risen Saviour gave this solitary parting commission to His disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, He added, "beginning at Jerusalem." When from His throne He spoke to Saul on the road to Damascus, He said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth"—such a name as only a patriot would use. How can we hear the cry from Macedonia, if our ear is too dull to hear the cry of the perishing at our own doors? If we love not the

people we have seen, how can we love the people we have not seen? How shall we pray for all nations, if we pray not for our own? He who loves the Saviour and his native land, will greatly desire that pure religion and undefiled may soon spread through every corner of it. His prayer will be that the Bible may do among the people what the plough has done for the soil. Many of the fields around us used to be waste lands, but now every foot has been cultivated, and rich harvests are gathered. And so every nook and corner in the land should be visited and blest by the servants of Christ. Christ likens His church to the light which touches, and adapts itself closely to all sorts of places and people. How sad that there are so many in our land, both rich and poor, who are living heathen lives amid Christian light! A minister one day said in his pulpit that he was going to preach to the heathen. When his people besought him not to leave them, he said that he was not going out of the city. A minister tells that when people were married some thirty years ago, they had to state their religion. The minister asked the bridegroom what he was to write in the schedule under the word religion. "Oh, just the religion that's going," he replied. He was told that such an answer would not do, and pressed for another. At last he said slowly, "*Nothing.*" Born in a Christian land, well educated, grown up to manhood, and yet living as if there were no such thing as religion in the world! And there are thousands among us opposite

whose religion you might truly write the one word, *Nothing*.

You should have pitying love for all around you who have erred, and gone out of the way. But your hearts should be drawn out chiefly to the young, who have had almost no chance of doing well ; who are untaught and uncared for ; and who are growing up among unholy sights and sounds. The more I know of these people, the less I like a name often given to them, "the lapsed masses." It means the fallen masses. Now all men form a lapsed mass ; for we are all the fallen sons of fallen Adam ; and we should not give to the ignorant and the poor a name of dishonour which may with equal justice be given to all men. I am sure that among these neglected people there are as noble hearts as beat under purple and gold. The words of Christ are true of many of them, "the last shall be first." God has been doing great things among them. I believe that under the sun there are no more grand and touching facts than are met with in this great home harvest-field of the church. Do you ask, What am I to do in it ? What can I do ? You can think about it. You should have a warm heart for the poor, and for all who try to do them good. You should resolve that when you are fit for it, you shall have some share in such Christ-like work. Your love should so unite you to your fellow-countrymen, that you will feel for their sins and sorrows. You should not be selfish, but ask God to help you, that through you His

saving health may be at least a little better known among your own people, and in your own nation. This is what is usually called the home-mission spirit. That is a very fine word, and sets forth plainly the sum of this address ; for the work of God begins at home in the hearts of men, and is carried on around their hearths, and then spreads in their neighbourhood in ever broadening circles, and enlarges the Christian heart to embrace.

IV. *The Whole World.*—The Christian prays that God's way and saving health may be known among all nations, and that God may be feared and praised from the rising of the sun unto his going down. He believes firmly that the ignorant heathen may be taught God's way. He also believes that God's saving health can cure all the deep running sores of the nations, and that nothing else can. He knows, too, that it is the duty, and should be the joy of all who know the glad tidings, to publish them over the whole earth. I have now come to what we call foreign missions, but we should regard all our missions as home missions. For the whole world was the home of the Son of man, and should be the home of His church ; and in these days when men run to and fro, and our ships plough every ocean, the farthest-off nations are really more our neighbours than some corners of our own country were a hundred years ago. A gentleman once said to Dr Skinner, who was asking aid for foreign missions, " I

don't believe in foreign missions. I won't give anything except to home missions. I want what I give to benefit my neighbours." "Well," the doctor made reply, "whom do you regard as your neighbours?" "Why, those around me." "Do you mean those whose land joins yours?" "Yes." "Well," said Dr Skinner, "how much land do you own?" "About five hundred acres," was the reply. "How far down do you own it?" inquired Dr Skinner. "Why, I never thought of it before, but I suppose I own half-way through." "Exactly," said the doctor; "I suppose you do, and I want this money for the Chinese—the men whose land joins yours on the bottom." Every Christian should say in a higher sense than the poet meant, "I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me."

Were I asked what boys and girls should do for foreign missions, my answer would be—*Read, Think, Give, Pray.*

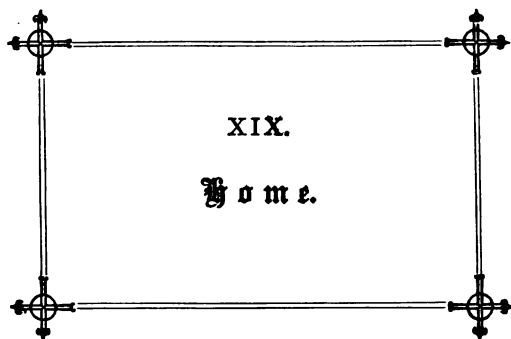
Foreign mission books are among the most interesting books you can read. Many of them are so fresh, and full of life and capital stories, and they give you so many new ideas. For missionaries, if not always the first to visit distant tribes, have been usually the first who dwelt among them and in every case, I think, the first to understand and write their language. You should admire these great and good men; and when you read about them, your heart consenting should say, "Well done, good and faithful servant:" "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good

tidings!" And as you read you should think; their words should kindle a fire within you. How true it is that these dark places are the habitations of cruelty! And how little has yet been done for them! Look at a mission-map of the world: such a sight made Dr Carey a missionary. Notice that the dark shadow of heathenism still covers the greater part of the earth. Then think what blessings the gospel brings to the heathen in a day of power. It makes the desert literally bloom like the rose. Our psalm says, "then shall the earth yield her increase." Wherever the gospel is received, war and strong drink—these two chief wasters of the earth and of men—are checked; and the lazy heathen are taught self-respect and industry. If you read and think, you will also *give*. What a sin and shame it is that this so-called Christian country spends little more than a million a-year on foreign missions, while it spends about one hundred and forty millions on strong drink, and I know not how many millions on war. You should give your own money, and make some sacrifice to give. For we owe untold blessings to the Gospel, and we are not worthy of these blessings if we won't make some effort to spread them. That young chimney-sweep in Belfast had the true mission spirit. One evening his comrade met him hurrying along the street with his face washed. "Where are you for to-night, Tom?" he asked. "Oh," Tom replied, "I am going to the mission-meeting." "What's taking you there?" he was asked again. "Oh," said Tom, "you see I have a share in the concern, and I

want to hear how it's getting on." But, above all, in the spirit of our psalm, you must pray first for yourself, and then for the poor heathen. Mission life is just the best Christian life in its best action. The name of Christ would soon be honoured among the heathen, if all who bore His name had also His spirit. "If all Christians were like him," a Hindoo priest said when a distinguished English officer died, "there would soon be none to worship our gods." How sad that men called Christians cause the name of Christ to be blasphemed among the heathen! All missionaries tell us that the bad lives of Europeans form one of the most terrible hindrances to their work. A book has just been written which gives an account of the Red Indians who are at war with the United States Government. The writer says that when the tribe over whom he was placed heard a sermon for the first time, the chiefs met at the close to consider it. One asked him, "Why did the Sunday-man swear the half of his talk?" These Indians knew the sacred names the preacher used, but knew them only as the oaths of men called Christians, and thus fancied that the preacher was swearing in his sermon. If blessing is to come to the heathen, it must begin at home among all who bear the name of Christ. Every zealous Christian must be a missionary. Wherever he goes he will be like the colonists in ancient times, who used to carry in their ships fire from the domestic hearth to the distant lands to which they were bound. Perhaps this little book may be read by some

boy who will become like the lad whose five barley loaves and two small fishes were so blessed by Christ, that they fed the whole multitude. Some reader of these pages may yet stand between Christ and the heathen, and hand round to them the bread of life, and be honoured as an apostle of the nations. I am glad that I have known many who, having decided for Christ in boyhood, have gladly given their lives to mission work. News has just reached us of the death of one of these, who was for some time my true yoke-fellow, Dr Black of Livingstonia. He was one of the best of missionaries. His grave on the shores of Lake Nyassa—it is the first European grave there—reminds me of the bones of Joseph which were carried up out of Egypt into Canaan as a token of his faith that the land would be given to his seed. So Dr Black's grave is a proof of his firm faith that Ethiopia shall yet stretch out her hands unto God. Like him we should expect great things, and attempt great things, among the heathen. All the grand prophecies of the Bible will one day be fulfilled. The time is coming when all the ends of the earth shall fear God. We should pray as those who are full of hope, that God's way and saving health shall be known among all nations. What hath God wrought in the foreign mission field during the last fifty years! Since the year 1800 the Bible has been printed for the first time in about two hundred different languages. Not long ago a young man from Raratonga (in the South Sea Islands) visited the British

Museum in London. There he saw a row of idols, and among others a Raratongan god. He looked at it with wondrous curiosity, and asked leave to take it in his hands. He gazed upon it for a while, and then passed it back to his guide, and said, "Thank you; that is the first idol I ever saw in my life." In the time of John Williams there were more than 100,000 gods in Raratonga; but that Raratongan of nineteen had never seen one of them till he came to London. The gospel of Christ had swept them all away. A friend told me that in his parish, one of the South Sea Islands, all the islanders were most degraded heathen twenty-five years ago, while now there was far more real Christianity in it than he had ever seen in his native parish in Scotland. Facts like these might be gathered from many a corner of the great mission field. Oh God, are heathen children to come from the north and south, and east and west, and sit down in Thy kingdom, while our children shall be shut out! But we need not go far from home for encouragements. In our land eighteen hundred years ago, naked people, whose bodies were smeared with red paint, were worshipping evil spirits in the heart of gloomy forests. Their Druid priests tuned the harp with fingers stained with the gore of little children who had been sacrificed on their smoking altars. Now nearly all profess the name of Christ, and thousands upon thousands truly serve Him. Let us believe that such wonders shall be wrought in every nation under heaven in the name of the holy child Jesus. Amen.



XIX.

Hom e.





WERE you about to visit a far-off country, you would consult books and maps, and make many inquiries about it. Now you hope to spend eternity in heaven, and surely you will be eager to acquaint yourself with it beforehand. Heaven is the landing-place of the Bible ; and, therefore, its last book favours us with many visions of heavenly things. God's closing words take us now in imagination, and are fitted to take us at last in reality, to the centre of the new Jerusalem.

In this address I shall range over the whole of the seventh chapter of the Book of Revelation. Of the countless glories of heaven I shall mention only four—

I. Work without Weariness.

II. Joy without Sorrow.

III. Safety without Danger.

IV. Rest without End.

I. Work without Weariness.—God has made us for work, and without work we never can be long happy. You never make a greater mistake than when you fancy that they are happiest who need not work except they choose, and who choose not to work at all. The most wretched people on earth are among the idlers. If you hate work, you are fighting against God who made you for work. It is amazing how much real pleasure we may get out of any piece of honest work, if only we are warmed up to a hearty interest in it. Man's highest happiness lies in good and successful work. On earth and in heaven, enjoyments and employments always go together. It was so in Eden, you remember. Though that garden had no weeds, its gardeners were not idle. And life in Paradise restored will not be idleness. For verse 15th says, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." Like royal servants on duty, they stand near the King, waiting His word, and ready to do His will. Their work is service, that is, work done because God wishes it, and as God wishes it. All they do is shaped by God's will. Only God's work is their work, and His will is all their pleasure. They are never weary of their work, nor weary in it; for they serve Him day and night. There may be wonderful work for man in heaven; but, so far as we are told, the chief part of their work is worship, and the chief part of their worship is praise. Nothing is more heaven-like than true worship. They serve as priests

"in His temple." Now, I wonder how many of us have such a heart for worship, that it reminds us of heaven. The child's hymn says of the church—

" I have been there, and still would go,
'Tis like a little heaven below."

But to which of us is the house of God like a little heaven? which of us can say with David, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord"? I remember a poor woman who was emigrating to America. Her feelings reminded me of the song—

" Oh, why left I my hame?
Why did I cross the deep?"

She regretted that she was leaving some of her family; but she regretted most of all, she said, that she was leaving the church which had been to her none other than the gate of heaven. I knew, too, a young man, who thought of giving up a good situation, as he was not sure that he should leave the church in which he had first worshipped God with his heart. I fear that such cases are not very common. But if you do not love to worship God on earth, how do you expect to worship Him in heaven?

Work here makes us weak and weary. If you do it with your might, fatigue soon spoils your pleasure. But in heaven they have work and worship day and night without weariness. They are not weighed down with dull, heavy bodies like ours, nor are their powers

ever worn out. The muscles of the heart, by which your body is kept in life, never grow weary. Day and night they do their work so easily, that, when in health, you never think of them; and in some such way the bodies of the blest will never suffer pain or fatigue. No weariness will steal upon God's children in the fresh and bracing air of heaven. And their Father will also grant them—

II. Joy without Sorrow.—Though sin has brought sorrow upon us, you may still have much joy on earth. With fair health, and common sense, and, above all, with God's grace in your heart, you may have great enjoyment. For the gospel is a joyous message, and the Christian has a joyous life. The religion of Jesus Christ is not a dull heavy burden: it is not His religion, but the want of it, that makes men wretched. For, as the poet truly says—

“ 'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die.

After death its joys will be
Lasting as eternity.
Be the living God my friend,
Then my joys shall never end.”

But though you should have more joy than any child of Adam ever had, you shall have your sorrows too. Some one has said that sorrow lies in wait on joy, like a tiger

crouching for its prey, and so near, that its breathing can be heard. Earth's best joys, though "clear in the spring, grow miry in the stream." Perhaps God mercifully puts some drops of sorrow into every cup of earthly joy, that we might seek the unmixed joys of heaven. What a joy good health is! But sickness comes, and sleeplessness, and disgust. Above they eat of the tree of life, and no one in that bright throng ever says, "I am sick." Food sufficient is sweet; but sometimes the wolf comes to the door, and many feel the awful pangs of hunger. Heaven holds no paupers—"They shall hunger no more. For the Lamb . . . shall feed them" (vers. 16 and 17). What a blessing a happy home is! But every home on earth has some dark shadow resting upon it. The home above is all sunshine and song. What a joy youth is! But tottering old age comes to rob us of this joy also. In heaven all are young. One has said that in heaven they grow towards youth as we grow towards age, so that the youngest is he who has lived longest. "Are you still in the land of the living?" an old man was once asked in a tone of surprise by a former acquaintance. "No," he replied, "but I'm going to it." I do not know why earth is often spoken of as "this vale of tears," except it be as we speak of the vale of Clyde, because that river runs through it. Thus earth's greatest river is that formed and fed by the tears of mourners. But the life above is tearless, for "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." He shall do it Himself, with His own

hand, as a mother wipes the tears from her child's cheeks. Thus you see that joy without sorrow is to be found not here, but yonder. Christ welcomes His servant home with these words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." On earth, Christ's joy entered into him as a new life ; but in heaven he enters into Christ's joy as a new world, or element in which he lives and moves and has his being ; just as a fish in the hand, kept in life by mouthfuls of water, enters into its joy when it is set free in the boundless ocean. This joy is not only for those who have great minds and great learning. For "the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." Children without number shall dwell in the heavenly city, within whose portals no sorrow can follow them. They too shall drink of the pure river which proceeds directly from the throne of God, and bears to all who drink of it a life like God's. They shall walk in the true paradise, every part of which glows with the smile of their God, who secures for them—

III. Safety without Danger.—Jesus Christ is called the Saviour, because He saves, or makes men safe. His chief blessing is salvation ; or, to put the old Latin word into plain English, safety. Yet so long as a Christian is in this world, danger is ever near, because sin is ever near. This is the reason why Christ and His apostles are always warning, not only the ungodly, but

the very best Christians against danger. They are full of holy, loving fear lest Christians should be led into sin. They are ever telling us that our path is full of snares, pitfalls, and stumbling-blocks. Robbers haunt it, and the roaring lion prowls about it. It is astonishing how great a danger a little thing may bring. You would think that a slender telegraph wire could not be very dangerous to the birds, yet the newspapers inform us that in a single season 631 partridges were killed by flying against the wires of the South Western Railway alone. And so many obstacles around which seem trifling, may do great harm to the unwary soul. It is the easiest thing in the world for even a good Christian to injure himself. One of my old teachers used to say, "There is hope for a sinner so long as he is out of hell, and fear for a saint so long as he is out of heaven." And you know that some of the holiest men of the Bible were caught once or twice in Satan's snares. We have all been reading about the Welsh miners at Tynewydd Colliery, who were heroically rescued after ten day's imprisonment in a deep mine, where they had neither food, nor light, nor drinking-water. Thousands crowded the pit-mouth amid intense excitement. When the supreme moment came, and one of the long-lost miners was brought to the surface, a death-like silence reigned for a minute or two. Then the pent-up feelings of the crowd found vent. All felt a thrill of unspeakable pleasure, and many a "thank God!" was heard. Hundreds in the wildest excitement were dancing, and

cheering, and half mad with joy. But that generous joy over comrades saved was soon damped by the thought of other dangers. It was feared that these poor fellows might die from the effects of starvation ; and if they recovered, they would soon dive again into the bowels of the earth where other accidents might befall them. They had safety after danger, and safety amid danger, but not safety without danger. But the saved in heaven have safety without danger. They are sealed on their foreheads (ver. 3), so that they are secured as God's own. They carry palms in their hands as a sign of perfect and everlasting victory (ver. 9). In the East, sun-stroke is a common danger, but there "the sun shall not light on them, nor any heat," of the hot wind, or of fever (ver. 16). They are under the special care of the Lamb, who is the heaven of heaven (ver. 17), and who then sees the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. If the crowd at that Welsh colliery were thrilled into rapture when they knew that their comrades, though still in great danger, had been saved from death in the pit, what shall we think of the song that bursts from the redeemed amid the splendours of glory, as they realise that at last they are safe beyond the reach of every danger, and that though scarcely saved, theirs is an everlasting salvation. That great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, have but one song, because they have but one Saviour ; and their music resounds through heaven's arches like the voice of

many waters, as they sing, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb (ver. 10). Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (ver. 12). Oh, my soul, art thou now learning to sing that new song?

IV. In heaven there is also **Rest without End**; for there the Lamb shall feed and lead as a shepherd His own sheep, and make them lie down and rest in the pastures of heaven (ver. 17). Like everything else in heaven, its rest is perfect; for that which is in part shall there be done away. Life is a sore battle to most people. It was so especially to the early Christians, who were both poor and persecuted. Therefore when the apostle wished to cheer them and himself, he wrote, "there remaineth a Sabbath rest for the people of God." Richard Baxter wrote a book which he called "The Saint's Everlasting Rest." He had to fight with weakness and sickness all his days, and hardly ever knew what rest was; and when he thought of heaven, the glorious truth that filled his soul, was its rest without end, the soul's repose for ever in the love of God. This rest is not broken by work without weariness, for the soul is so formed, that it finds rest only in loved work. Your choicest days of rest from school work are those in which you happily exert yourself. Movement, activity, is the very soul and charm of your holidays. As the poet says,—

“ The want of occupation is not rest,
The mind quite vacant is a mind distress.”

In the sweet fields of Eden, there is rest for the weary, but it is rest in work that never wearies. How sweet such rest must have seemed to the beloved disciple and his companions in tribulation, who had felt the fury of all the storms.

What a home heaven is !—Work without weariness, joy without sorrow, safety without danger, and rest without end. You must some day bid farewell to your sweet home on earth ; have you thought much about the home above ? I knew a little girl about three years of age, who burst into tears when she heard that her father's house was to be pulled down. She was comforted by the news that her father had got another house for her. “ But will it, too, not be taken down some day ? ” she asked. The answer did not remove her fears ; but she soon said cheerily, “ Well, if it's taken down, we will all just go into a boat and live on the sea.” She had been in a boat for the first time a few weeks before. After thinking a little, she said, “ Well, that won't do ; if our new house is taken down, we must all just flit to heaven.” The little girl was quite right, for our chapter shews that every home but the heavenly shall one day be laid in ruins.

This seventh chapter follows an account of a great earthquake, which shall in the end destroy the whole earth, the seas, and the heavens. The very stars shall fall, as figs fall from the fig-tree shaken of a mighty

wind. The traveller Humboldt gives an interesting account of the first earthquake he witnessed. It was at Cumana in South America. The first shock came after a strange stillness. It caused an earthquake in his mind, for it overthrew in a moment all his lifelong notions about the safety of the earth. He could no longer trust the soil which, up to that day, had felt so firm under his feet. He had only one thought—universal, boundless destruction. Even the crocodiles ran from the river Orinoco howling into the woods ; the dogs and pigs were powerless with fear. The whole city seemed “the hearth of destruction.” The houses could not shelter, for they were falling in ruins. He turned to the trees, but they were overthrown. His next thought was to run to the mountains, but they were reeling like drunk men. He then looked towards the sea. Lo ! it had fled ; and the ships, which a few minutes before were in deep water, were rocking on the bare sand. He tells us that, being then at his wit's end, he looked up, and observed that heaven alone was perfectly calm and unshaken. Many strange things are yet to come upon the world—earthquakes, overturnings, upheavings. But amid them all, as this book tells us, the Christian shall look up to the heavenly One, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,” and to His heavenly home which cannot be moved.

Now heaven is for the heavenly : heaven must begin in our hearts on earth. The Bible tells us often and

very plainly that the godless and sinful shall in no wise enter into it. Only God's servants are sealed for it. If you wish to have heaven for your home, you must love and worship the Lamb here ; you must serve God with your heart ; and you must follow holiness, which is the only pass-port to the holy city. You love to sing hymns about heaven : I notice a great many such hymns in all your hymn-books ; but it is not so easy to have about us some part of the spirit and habits of heaven. Perhaps you think that you can have no joy apart from these breathing bodies, yon smiling sun, and this warm, green earth. Heaven sometimes seems a dreary, far-off, and unfurnished place—a mere story, in which reality does not rule. It is very hard for the young to regard heaven with a real home-feeling. A strange uneasy feeling comes over you when you think about it. Your young heart fondly cleaves to earth, and perhaps you secretly hate the thought of quitting it. You wish you could live here alway. If all your thoughts are of that sort, can you count yourself one of the heavenly ?

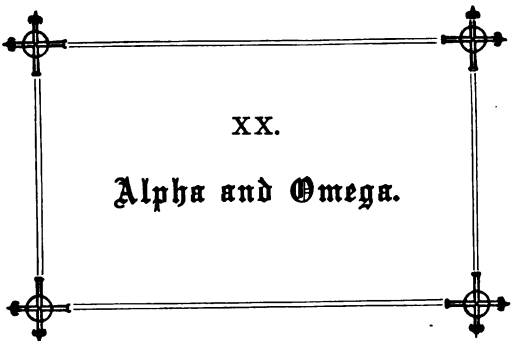
At the very least, the joys of heaven should move you with a great desire to reach it, and should keep you from murmuring over the loss of your loved ones who have died in the Lord. You should pray that you may live near heaven in spirit, so that you may not have far to go when you quit earth. At the close of the Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan describes most beautifully what he saw at the close of his dream—Christian and Hopeful going safely through the river in which they left their

mortal garments ; the two shining ones who met them ; the hearty welcome the King's trumpeters gave them ; the heavenly host that compassed them round on every side, as if heaven itself had come down to meet them ; the bells of the celestial city ringing for joy ; the welcome at the gate ; their new raiment that shone like gold ; their crowns and harps ; and he adds, "which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them." You may be among them if you wish it. Surprised at seeing in that holy place, and in the garments of innocence, so many of our sinful race, one of the elders asked, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?" (ver. 13). A friend told me that he once heard Mr Arnot preaching in the open air on a fine summer evening. A bright cloud rose in the sky as a canopy over the congregation. Pointing to it till all eyes were fastened upon it, he asked, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?" He then explained that all the drops of water in the cloud came from the seas, from the rivers, and from the filthy puddles in the wynds and slums of the cities. The sun had shone upon them all, drawn them upwards, purified them, and gathered them all together in one in heaven. And so the great cloud of witnesses John saw in vision had been drawn together by the Sun of Righteousness, who had also purified and glorified them. "The city lieth four-square," as it gathers its citizens from all quarters. Were you to ask me how they came there, I might answer, "Sir, thou knowest

. . . they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. *Therefore* are they before the throne of God." They were not saved by their great virtues, nor by their great tribulations. They do not divide their salvation among many merits and mediators ; but they make heaven ring with the one song of free grace. We know that some of these robes, now whiter than snow, were once as foully soiled with sin and self as any robes ever worn on earth. For in that radiant company we recognise some who were once the chief of sinners, but all their robes have been washed clean. And you may have your robes washed in the same blood : it can do for you, even you, all it did for them. Use it ; try it, and then you may heartily sing the favourite hymn—

“ Dear dying Lamb ! Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.

Then in a nobler sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.”



XX.

Alpha and Omega.





EVERY stranger who visits Rome wishes to see the catacombs and the Pope's palace. The catacombs are underground quarries, not unlike our coal-mines, stretching away for miles, with endless passages turning and twisting in every direction. In these dark, out-of-the-way corners the early Christians met for worship in days of bloody persecution; and there they buried their dead in graves which appear in the rock like the cells in a honey-comb. They built up the graves with big stones, upon which you can still see what we may call the monogram or crest of the early Christians. Many people have the first letters of their name and surname cunningly woven together, that they may put them on their seal and furniture, their books and letters. That is called a monogram. The early Christians had the same habit; but they took the first letters, not of their own names, but of the name of their

dear Redeemer. They chiselled upon their tombstones, in big straggling letters—



That sign is made up of the two first letters in the Greek name of Christ placed in the middle, with Alpha on the one side and Omega on the other. In the Pope's palace you are led through a very long passage, called "the gallery of inscriptions." Heathen tombstones fill up the one side, and Christian tombstones the other. All the heathen inscriptions make one wail of despair, but on the Christian side we were saluted with the joyous hope of the resurrection, and of meeting again in heaven. Everywhere you see their favourite motto, as I have described it. They took that motto from four passages in the Book of Revelation, chapter i. 8 and 11; xxi. 6; and xxii. 13. In each of these Jesus says, "I am Alpha and Omega."

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, just as A and Z are our first and last letters. The two first Greek letters were Alpha, Beta. Instead of saying, as we do, the A B C, they said the Alpha-beta; and so we have borrowed from them the name Alphabet. Christ explains His meaning when He calls Himself the Alpha and the Omega: He is "the beginning and the end, the first and the last." When you say that the general should be the first on

the battle-field and the last to quit it, you mean that he should be in it all through. And thus Christ is the first and the last ; the all, and in all.

A great man has said that one of the very best statements of the gospel he ever heard of, came from the lips of a dying peasant girl. She was asked what her hope rested upon. Putting her hand upon her Bible, she said, " Christ there ;" then laying her hand upon her breast, " and Christ here ;" and lifting her eye and finger to heaven, " and Christ there." The dying cottager's division of our subject is the best. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega—

I. In the Bible.

II. In the Heart.

III. In Heaven.

Strange enough, hers is really the same division as that of Christ Himself. For, in chapter i. 8 and 11, He declares Himself to be the Alpha and Omega in the Book, and in the churches, that is, in the heart of every one in the churches ; and in the other two passages He is introduced to us as the Alpha and Omega of heaven.

I. Christ is the A and the Z of the Bible. Anybody who knows his Bible well could begin with Genesis and go through to Revelation, proving at every step that Christ is the A and Z of the whole. The good news about Christ is very old, and takes us back

to the gates of Eden ; God was the first preacher of it, Adam and Eve the first hearers—"the seed of the woman shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." God then told that man should have a human Saviour, a suffering Saviour, and a conquering Saviour. You remember Noah's ark, "which ark was Christ," Peter says. When writing this, I saw from my study-window a great mass of black, scudding clouds, and a rainbow rising amid them : that sight, thought I, illustrates my subject. For among all the dark clouds of sin and judgment there is always some sign of God's mercy. Christ, like a rainbow, spans the whole firmament of the Old Testament. There are many types ; and one has truly said, that Christ is the key hung up before the door of every type, by which you may easily open it, and gain all its treasures. Then you come to the psalms, and an old writer says, "You should read the psalms with your left eye on David, and your right eye on David's Son and Lord, Jesus Christ." All the prophets love to speak of a good time coming, and of the coming Man. With outstretched face, and beaming eye, and throbbing heart, they all look forward and say, "He's coming ;" and John the Baptist, the last of the prophets, exclaims, " He's come, here He is ; Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The law, that is the whole Old Testament, was, as the apostle tells us, our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The schoolmaster he means was a child-leader who took the boy by the

hand and led him to the school. The cry of the disciples is, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." I need not tell you that every part of the New Testament is full of Christ. His name is found about one thousand times in its pages. Christ appears in the Bible as He appeared on the holy mount of transfiguration. Moses and Elias and all the other writers retire, and leave Him in possession of the whole field, so that the disciples may see no man save "Jesus only." All the truths press to Him as their one centre. He crowds, crowns, closes the Book of God.

II. Jesus is also the A and Z in salvation—in the Heart of every Christian in the churches. When the ship *Emma* was on her voyage from Gothenburg to Harwich, the captain spied, according to the account I read, a curious black speck in the distance. His telescope did not enable him to make out what it was. He bore down upon it, and when nearer, it looked like a tub upside down, with a handkerchief waving atop. A boat was lowered, and it was soon found that the mysterious object was a capsized boat with three sailors in it. The ship these three poor fellows belonged to had foundered, and their boat had capsized, though they had managed to hold on by the seats. They resolved to make an effort for dear life. One of them had a big knife, with which they began to dig a hole in the bottom of the boat above their heads.

They dug away in turns till the blade broke ! But they did not yield to despair. They tore out some of the nails in the boat ; and, after many weary hours of digging, they saw daylight above them. Then one of them put his hand through the hole and waved his handkerchief, in the hope of gaining the notice of some passing ship. The sailors of the good ship *Emma* soon rescued these perishing men, carried them down to the cabin, gave them dry clothes and strengthening cordials, and shewed them all kindness, till they were safely landed at Harwich. That captain was the A and Z of their safety. They owed everything to him. He drew them out of the deep waters ; he did all that was needed by the way ; nor did he leave them till he had brought them rejoicing to the desired haven. And so the Captain of our salvation is the A and Z of the whole work ; no other has any share in it. When a sinner wishes salvation, he must turn from every other, and begin with Jesus. As there is no letter in the alphabet before A, so there is no help in the universe for you till you put yourself into Jesus' hand.

“ None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.”

And in fighting against sin, and trying to live a holy life, you must keep looking unto Jesus. At every step you must look to Him for all the grace you need, and give Him all the glory. And however good a life you may live, Christ must be the Z of it. When an old minister lay a-dying, some one said to him, “ Well,

what are you doing?" "Doing," he said, "why I am putting all my good deeds and all my bad deeds into a bundle, and flinging them overboard, that I may sail to glory on the plank of free grace." Or, as a dying Christian once said, "I wish to pass through the veil, like the High Priest, with the blood of atonement in my hand."

As we read in chapter i., ver. 11, Christ is the A and Z to His people in all the churches. I came lately across a beautiful illustration of this truth in the life of Zwingli, the great Reformer of Switzerland. In his youth he loved learning, and committed his Greek Testament to memory. It made him feel uncomfortable: he began to fear that the gospel he preached was not the gospel of Christ and the Apostles. He had been born and bred in the Church of Rome, where the Virgin, and the Pope, and the mass, and I know not what other persons and things, were the A and Z of salvation. One day he read in a book, "all grace is from Jesus Christ." "All?" he said to himself as he strolled among the mountains, "all? none from the virgin or the Pope!" "No, Christ is our only treasure." Soon afterwards he became preacher at the famous monastery at Einsiedeln, one of the greatest places in the world for pilgrimages. Above the abbey gate there was, and still is, the blasphemous inscription, "Here a full remission of all sins may be obtained." Zwingli pondered the words, and his soul rose against them. His one theme now became, "*Christ alone*

saves, and *He saves everywhere*;" and his words spread like wildfire among the Swiss mountains. He left the church of Rome. Then his enemies taunted him, "You are a heretic; you have left the one Catholic Church, out of which there is no salvation." But Zwingle turned upon them boldly, and said something like this, "You call yours the Catholic Church (Catholic means world-wide, or universal); but you are no Catholics; we are the true Catholics. Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the centre of our church; but the Pope of Rome is the centre of yours. Abraham and the saints in the olden times could not belong to your Church: they had no connection with the Pope at Rome; but they were of the church to which we belong; for we are Christ's, and therefore, as Paul says, Abraham's seed." "The church in heaven is a different church from yours," he said grandly, "for in heaven there is no Rome, and no Pope; but we belong to the true Catholic Church which embraces heaven and earth. The Saviour is the One Head of our church; and so we are of the family in heaven and earth, named after the name of Jesus Christ." Make Christ your A and Z, and you will then be closely united to all the faithful of every age and nation, and to all the saints in glory. For—

III. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of Heaven. John was favoured with many visions of the future and of heaven. Many strange events are yet to take place

on the earth ; but of the last things the greatest is the coming again of Christ. When He shall come again, we cannot tell ; but it is enough for us to know that He shall come again with power and glory, and that all His people shall live and reign with Him. He is the A and Z of the whole hereafter that stretches between the time that now is and the end of all. He is also the A and Z of all the joys of heaven. They all gather around His throne, and cast their crowns at His feet. It is He who gives them work without weariness, joy without sorrow, safety without danger, and rest without end. As the last address proves, "the Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land."

As Christ is the A and Z in the Bible, in the heart of every Christian, and in Heaven, He should be also your A and Z. May He be to you all He has been to the best in every age.

You are beginning life, and everything depends on the way in which you begin. A captain once explained to me the good points and the faults of his steamer. In many respects she was equal to any ship that ploughed the wave. But, by some unnoticed accident, the keel had been slightly twisted while a-building. That twist had gone through the whole ship, and it made all her movements so crooked, that it was very hard to steer straight. You are now building for time and eternity ; your life is on the stocks : take care that there is no twist in the keel. You shall be delivered from all that is crooked, if you make Christ the Alpha

and Omega of the foundation upon which you build, and of the whole building you erect thereon.

Let us all honour the Lord Jesus Christ as the Alpha and the Omega. For "His name shall endure for ever ; His name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in Him ; all nations shall call Him blessed. And blessed be His glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen."



LIST OF NEW BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY

JAMES NISBET & CO.

THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PETER: being the Life and Times of the Apostle. By the Rev J. R. MACDUFF, D.D., Author of "The Gates of Praise," "The Healing Waters of Israel," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

UNDER THE WAVES ; or, Diving in deep Waters. By R. M. BALLANTYNE, Author of "The Rivers of Ice," "The Pirate City," &c. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

MY OLD LETTERS. A Poem. By the Rev. H. BONAR, D.D., Author of "Hymns of Faith and Hope," "The Rent Veil," &c. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

BERNARDINO OCHINO OF SIENA. A Contribution towards the History of the Reformation. By KARL BENRATH. Translated by HELEN ZIMMERN. With Preface by Rev. W. ARTHUR. Demy 8vo, cloth.

VOICES FROM THE LAKES, and other Poems. By the Rev. C. D. BELL, M.A., Rector of Cheltenham, and Hon. Canon of Carlisle; Author of "The Saintly Calling," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

ARREST THE DESTROYER'S MARCH. By Mrs. WIGHTMAN, Author of "Haste to the Rescue," &c. Small Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. Cloth.

MY KING! or, Daily Thoughts for the Children of the King. By F. R. HAVERGAL, Author of "Morning Bells," and "Little Pillows," &c., &c. 16mo, 1s. cloth.

A HERO IN THE BATTLE OF LIFE, and other brief Memorials. By the Author of "Memorials of Captain Hedley Vicars," &c. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. WILLIAM ARNOT, Edinburgh. By His DAUGHTER. Post 8vo, cloth.

MISCALCULATION. A Tale. By HARRIETTE BOWRA. Author of "Redlands; or, Home Temper," "Una," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

THE HOME AT GREYLOCK. By Mrs. PRENTISS, Author of "Stepping Heavenward," &c. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

THE HOLY CHILDHOOD. Conversations on the Earliest Portion of the Gospel Narrative. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

THE SEED OF THE CHURCH. A Tale of the Days of Trajan. By HELEN MARY DICKINSON, Author of "The Child of the Chosen People." Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

EIGHT LECTURES ON ROMANISM, RITUALISM, AND REVELATION. By the Rev. W. McCaw, M.A., Manchester. Crown 8vo, 3s. cloth.

THE HIDDEN MYSTERY ; or, the Revelations of the Word. Being Thoughts, Suggestive and Practical, upon Psalm xix. 1—6. With Coloured Frontispiece. By ROBERT BROWN, Author of Expositions of the Parable of the Sower, and of Hebrews vi. 4-8 ; of "Babylonianism," "Jesuitism," "Reaping in due Season," "Spiritual Blessing," &c. Demy 8vo, cloth.

REMARKABLE PROVIDENCES, AND PROOFS OF A DIVINE REVELATION ; with Thoughts, Facts, and Anecdotes, for the Weak in Faith, the Doubter, and the Infidel. By JOHN RICHARDSON PHILLIPS, Author of "Remarkable Answers to Prayer." Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

LITTLE FRIENDS AT GLENWOOD. By JOANNA H. MATHEWS, Author of "Little Sunbeams." &c. Small Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

THE GOLD OF CHICKAREE. A Completion of "Wych Hazel." By the Author of "The Wide Wide World," &c. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

SONGS OF GRACE AND GLORY. Hymnal and Musical Treasures of the Church of Christ. Edited by the Rev. C. B. SNEPP, LL.M., and FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL. Musical Edition. *Full Edition of 1094 Hymns and 300 Tunes.* Small Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d., cloth.

PALESTINE RE-PEOPLED ; or, Scattered Israel's Gathering One of the Signs of the Times. By Rev. JAMES NEIL, B.A., formerly Incumbent of Christ Church, Jerusalem. Post 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth ; 2s. sewed.

ANGELS AND MEN. A Poem by WELLEN SMITH.

Small Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

ESTHER ; or, Songs of the Captivity, and other Poems.

By AGNES VETCH GRAHAME. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

NIGHT SCENES OF THE BIBLE AND THEIR

TEACHING. First and Second Series. By the Rev. C. D. BELL, M.A. Two Vols., each Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

OF WHAT DOES IT CONSIST ; or, The Elements

of Saving Truth in "A Basket of Fragments and Crumbs." By Lieut.-Col. M. J. ROWLANDSON. 16mo, 1s. 6d. cloth.

THE SONG OF SONGS. A Practical Exposition of the

Song of Solomon. By the Rev. A. MOODY STUART, Author of "The Three Marys." Crown 8vo, 6s. cloth.

THE WELL IS DEEP ; or, Scripture Illustrating Scrip-

ture. Arranged as Morning and Evening Bible Readings for every day in the Year. 32mo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST WITH MAN ; Its

Teachings and its Consolations. By the Rev. O. WINSLOW, D.D., Author of "The Precious Things of God," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

A SELECTION FROM JAMES NISBET AND CO.'S CATALOGUE.

WILD FLOWERS OF THE HOLY LAND. Fifty-four Plates, printed in Colours; drawn and painted after Nature, by Mrs. HANNA ZELLER, Nazareth. With an Introduction by the Rev. H. B. TRISTRAM, Canon of Durham, and a Preface by E. ATKINSON, Esq., F.L.S., F.Z.S. 4to, 21s. cloth.

"We need hardly say that the 54 plates contained in this volume are all gems. Delicate in outline, brilliant in colouring, the eye rests upon each in turn with admiration and pleasure, and with a certain affectionate regard arising from the hallowed associations with which they are inseparably connected. . . . The type and binding are both elegant and effective."—*Record*.

THE ROMANCE OF MISSIONS; or, Inside Views of
Life and Labour in the Land of Ararat. By MARIA A. WEST, Missionary of the American Board in Turkey. With an Introduction by Mrs. CHARLES, Author of "The Schönberg-Cotta Chronicles." Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

"From the first page to the last the interest never flags."—*Edinburgh Daily Review*.

OUR COFFEE ROOM. By ELIZABETH R. COTTON.
With Preface by Lieut.-Gen. Sir ARTHUR COTTON, R.E., K.C.S.I. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"A story of Christian effort . . . told in a simple unostentative manner that is exceedingly pleasant. . . . Will be read with interest of no ordinary kind."—*Rock*.

**FORTY YEARS' MISSION WORK IN POLYNESIA
AND NEW GUINEA.** From 1835 to 1875. By the Rev. A. W. MURRAY,
London Missionary Society. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth. With Illustrations.

"We welcome with cordiality Mr. Murray's modest, intelligent, and scrupulously-guarded narrative of events."—*English Independent*.

MEMORIALS OF A QUIET MINISTRY: Being the
Life and Letters of the Rev. ANDREW MILROY. By his Son, the Rev. A. W. MILROY, M.A., Oxon. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth. With Portrait and Illustrations.

"Written with correct taste and exquisite finish."—*Edinburgh Daily Review*.

"The biographer has done his task with much delicacy and ability."—*Stirling Observer*.

RIVERS OF ICE. A Tale Illustrative of Alpine Adventure and Glacier Action. By R. M. BALLANTYNE, Author of "The Pirate City." Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth. With Illustrations.

"A tale brimful of interest and stirring adventure. Mr. Ballantyne succeeds in imparting a vast amount of valuable information respecting glaciers. The book is an excellent one to put in the hands of youthful readers—indeed, many of their elders might peruse it with profit."—*Glasgow Herald*.

THE GATES OF PRAISE, AND OTHER ORIGINAL HYMNS, POEMS, AND FRAGMENTS OF VERSE. By the Rev. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D., Author of "The Gates of Prayer," "Morning and Night Watches," &c. 16mo, 2s. cloth.

"Exhibits considerable poetic fancy and constructive dramatic skill; the verse is flowing and vigorous."—*Christian*.

FOUNDATION TRUTHS. Lectures on Romans viii. 33, 34, preached in Portman Chapel during Lent, 1875. By the Rev. J. W. REEVE, M.A., Author of "The Titles of Jehovah," &c. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"We have read these masterly lectures with the utmost pleasure. They are admirable specimens of plain, practical preaching, occasionally rising into eloquence."—*Edinburgh Courant*.

HOLDEN WITH THE CORDS. By the Author of "Within and Without." With Coloured Illustrations. Golden Ladder Series. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"We have rarely read a minor novel which deserves higher or more unqualified commendation than this."—*British Quarterly Review*.

SEEKING THE LOST. Incidents and Sketches of Christian Work in London. By the Rev. C. J. WHITMORE, Author of "The Bible in the Workshop." Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"Full of bright narrative, earnest teaching, and solemn warning, and will be welcomed by all who take an interest in missionary efforts among our lowest classes."—*Christian World*.

LILIES OR THISTLEDOWN. By JULIA A. MATTHEWS, Author of "Nettie's Mission," &c. Crown 8vo, 2s. cloth.

"A charming book for children's libraries."—*English Independent*.

THE GOSPEL AND ITS MINISTRY. By ROBERT ANDERSON, LL.D. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth; 3s. gilt edges.

"Will be read by the intelligent student of Scripture with deep interest, and cannot fail to prove of great service towards the more accurate knowledge of the Word of God."—*Christian's Pathway of Power*.

SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS; or, Lilian Lane. By S. M. HOLWORTHY, Author of "Deep Roots for Pleasant Fruits." Small crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

SOUTH AFRICAN MISSIONS. By C. H. MALAN,
Author of "A Soldier's Experience." Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"We have found the perusal of this book very refreshing, and cordially recommend it to our readers. . . . To all lovers of missions it will afford pleasure and profit."—*Christian*.

THE BORDER LAND, AND OTHER POEMS.

By L. N. R., Author of "The Book and its Story." New Edition, Royal 32mo, 1s. 6d. cloth. Gilt edges.

"An elegant little volume."—*Record*.

THE APOCALYPSE: THE VOICE OF JESUS

FROM THE THRONE OF GLORY. With an Exegetical and Practical Commentary. By the Rev. J. BAYLEE, D.D., Author of "The Times of the Gentiles." Post 8vo, 9s. cloth.

"A sober, sensible volume."—*Christian Observer and Advocate*.

CONVERSATIONS ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, AS FAR AS THE END OF CHAP. XV. By EMILY TEMPLE FRERE. Post 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"These conversations are pleasantly written. . . . The task undertaken has been admirably performed."—*Rock*.

GIVING TRUST: Containing "Bread and Oranges" and "The Rapids of Niagara," tales illustrating the "Lord's Prayer." By SUSAN WARNER. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth. With Coloured Illustrations. Golden Ladder Series.

"The story is well told, and the teaching both on useful and religious topics is carried on briskly and lively, . . . in a way which is sure to secure interest."—*Guardian*.

ECHOES FROM A CONTINENTAL CITY AND

A LONDON SUBURB. By the Rev. F. J. SERJEANT. New and Revised Edition. Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d. cloth.

"A volume of choice and deeply interesting sermons."—*Our Own Fireside*.

AUNT EFFIE'S GIFT TO THE NURSERY. New Edition, 16mo, 1s. 6d. cloth.

HYMNS OF FAITH AND HOPE. Royal Edition, containing most of the Hymns in the Three Series. With antique borders. By the Rev. H. BONAR, D.D., Author of "Earth's Morning," &c. New Edition, royal 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth extra.

"The volume is very chaste and beautiful, and deserves to be a great favourite."—*British Quarterly Review*.

IMMANUEL'S LAND, AND OTHER PIECES.

By A. R. C. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"Beautiful and stirring songs of spiritual love and battle. . . . A choice bouquet of sacred song."—*Christian*.

WYCH HAZEL. A Story by SUSAN and ANNA WARNER.

Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth,

"A pleasant, well-written story . . . The various characters are admirably drawn, and the narrative as a whole serves to illustrate and enforce some important lessons."—*Rock*.

A NEW SOLUTION IN PART OF JOHN'S REVELATION; Showing that Chapters i. to xi. chiefly describe the Apostasy; Chapters xii. to xxii., the True Church. By the Rev. R. GASCOYNE, Author of "Redemption Unfolded." New Edition, enlarged, crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.**ILLUSTRATIVE TEXTS AND TEXTS ILLUSTRATED.** By the Rev. J. W. BARDSLEY, M.A. New and Enlarged Edition, Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"A better book for a Sunday School teacher's or parish library could not be met with."—*Record*.

"A very attractive little book, remarkably fresh and striking, full of healthy teaching."—*Freeman*.

OUR ISRAELITISH ORIGIN. By the late JOHN WILSON, Author of "The Title Deeds of the Holy Land." A New and Enlarged Edition. Post 8vo, 9s. cloth.

"In the singularly revived interest lately manifested in the question of 'Our Israelitish Origin,' Mr. Wilson's original work ought not to be forgotten. . . . Years of careful reading and culling have enriched the pages."—*Record*.

ESTHER'S JOURNAL; or, A Tale of Swiss Pension Life.

By a Resident. Edited by Miss WHATELY. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"A charming little book, written with grace and brightness."—*Harbinger of Dawn*.

A COMMENTARY ON LEVITICUS, EXPOSITORY AND PRACTICAL. With Critical Notes. By the Rev. A. A. BONAR,

Author of "The Visitor's Book of Texts." New Edition, 8vo, 8s. 6d. cloth.

"Very precious. Mr. Andrew Bonar has a keen eye for a typical analogy, but he always keeps the rein upon his imagination, and is therefore safe to follow."—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* in "Commenting and Commentaries."

PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF AN INDIAN MERCHANT; being Memorials of ROBERT BROWN, late of Bombay. Compiled by his Sister, HELEN COLVIN. New Edition, crown 8vo, 5s. 6d. cloth.**FOUND ON THE DARK MOUNTAINS.** By the

Author of "Light in the Clouds." Crown 8vo, 1s. cloth limp.

"An interesting little narrative."—*Rock*.

TWELVE MONTHS IN MADAGASCAR. By the Rev. Dr. MULLENS, Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth, with Illustrations.

"Heartily do we recommend it as one of the best books of travel, and one of the best in missionary literature, that we have ever read."—*Nonconformist*.

THE WOMEN OF INDIA, AND CHRISTIAN WORK IN THE ZENANA. By Mrs. WEITBRECHT. Crown 8vo, 3s. cloth.

"We most earnestly recommend to our readers this most interesting volume, which will be a most welcome addition to our missionary literature."—*Christian Observer and Advocate*.

THE SAINTLY CALLING. By the Rev. C. D. BELL, M.A., Rector of Cheltenham, and Hon. Canon of Carlisle. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"We heartily commend this little volume as a most seasonable and valuable contribution to the Church in these perilous times."—*Record*.

THE GOLDEN CHAIN. By the Author of "Memorials of Captain Hedley Vicars," "Crossing the River," &c. Crown 8vo, 1s. 6d. cloth.

"The links of this chain are mainly composed of touching and instructive incidents."—*Christian*.

NURSES FOR THE NEEDY; or, the Bible Women
Nurses in the Homes of the London Poor. By L. N. R., Author of "The Missing Link." Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"Some of the sketches given are touching in their tenderness, while they are all instructive in a high degree."—*Edinburgh Daily Review*.

MORNING BELLS AND LITTLE PILLOWS; being
Waking and Good Night Thoughts for the Little Ones. By FRANCES R. HAVERGAL. Royal 32mo, each 6d. sewed; 9d. cloth.

"They are written in so affectionate and interesting a way that the youthful reader cannot fail to become more and more delighted as each successive page is perused."—*Christian Standard*.

CLEFTS OF THE ROCK; or, The Believer's Grounds
of Confidence in Christ. By the Rev. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D., Author of "The Gates of Prayer," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"Is rich in illustration, and will form a welcome present to devout readers."—*Freeman*.

THE PIRATE CITY. An Algerine Tale. By R. M. BALLANTYNE, Author of "Black Ivory," &c. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"The tale is told with Mr. Ballantyne's usual facility."—*Athenaeum*.

"The story is of thrilling interest."—*Graphic*.

THE RENT VEIL. By the Rev. H. BONAR, D.D.,

Author of "The Christ of God," &c. Crown 8vo, 3s. cloth.

"Simple and direct in its style, rich in its Biblical theology, and ripe in its spiritual experience."—*English Presbyterian Messenger*.

SEED-TIME IN KASHMIR; A Memoir of WILLIAM J.

ELMSLIE, M.D., F.R.C.S.E., &c., late Medical Missionary of the C. M. S. in Kashmir. By his WIDOW and Dr. W. BURNS THOMPSON, Medical Missionary. Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d. cloth.

"A very interesting, stimulating, and profitable biography."—*Christian Treasury*.

EDDA. Tales of a Grandmother. A History of Denmark.

Edited by PHILOJUVENIS. New Edition, with Illustrations. 4to, 10s. 6d. cloth.

"A worthy book, with delightful illustrations, which carry the eyes to many amusing anecdotes."—*Guardian*.

A MEMOIR OF THE RIGHT REV. ROBERT

DALY, D.D., LATE LORD BISHOP OF CASHEL, &c. By Mrs. HAMILTON MADDEN, Author of "Personal Recollections of the Bishop of Cashel." Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

"The author furnishes much that is interesting and valuable."—*Rock*.

BERTRAM; or, The Heir of Pendyne. A Tale.

Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"A very pleasing, well-written, and most interesting tale, . . . the religious tone is good, reverent, and practical."—*Record*.

REAL PICTURES OF CLERICAL LIFE IN IRE-

LAND. By J. DUNCAN CRAIG, D.D., Author of "La Debonâdo."—Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

"Thoroughly interesting, and full of instruction to those who care to learn."—*Rock*.

FOUR YEARS IN ASHANTEE. By the Missionaries.

RAMSEYER and KÜHNE. Post 8vo, 6s. cloth.

"We have here one of the most vividly interesting and romantic works of travel and Christian missions."—*Nonconformist*.

EARTH'S MORNING; or, Thoughts on Genesis. By

the Rev. HORATIUS BONAR, D.D., Author of "Light and Truth," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"The expositions of words and phrases are marked by much solid learning."—*Weekly Review*.

A SOLDIER'S EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S LOVE
AND OF HIS FAITHFULNESS TO HIS WORD. By C. H. MALAN,
once a Major in the British Army. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.
"It is full of incident, and pervaded by a fine religious spirit."—*Daily Review*.

HILLS THAT BRING PEACE. By the Rev. CHARLES
D. BELL, M.A. Honorary Canon of Carlisle. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.
"We express our sincere hope that such an able and excellent course of lectures
may have a wide circulation."—*Record*.

LETTERS OF RUTH BRYAN. By the Author of
"Handfuls of Purpose." With a Preface by the Rev. A. MOODY STUART,
M.A. New Edition. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.
"Ruth Bryan's letters are remarkably like Samuel Rutherford's, not rivalling them
in depth, and genius, and sanctified wit sublimed into heavenly imagery, but closely
resembling them in most winning, unwearied, and gloriously endless eulogy of the
King in his beauty."—*Extract from Preface*.

LECTURES ON GREAT MEN. By the late Rev.
FREDERIC MYERS, M.A. With Preface by the Rev. T. H. TARTLTON. Sixth
Edition. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.
"Admirable lectures, true, sterling, thorough."—*Watchman*.

A GOLDEN SUNSET. An account of the last days of
Hannah Broomfield. By the Rev. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D., Author of "The
Gates of Prayer," &c. 16mo, 1s. 6d. cloth.
"As a present for servants the book is especially valuable; but few masters or
mistresses could read it without pleasure or profit."—*Christian*.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. Sermons on the Apostolic
Commission. (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.) By the Rev. ADOLPH SAPHIR, B.A.
Crown 8vo, 6s. cloth.
"Eloquent, beautiful, and profoundly evangelical sermons."—*Literary World*.

SELECT REMAINS OF ISLAY BURNS, D.D., of
the Free Church College, Glasgow. Edited by the Rev. JAMES C. BURNS.
With Memoir by the Rev. Professor BLAIKIE, D.D. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.
"A varied and most instructive volume."—*Weekly Review*.

CROSSING THE RIVER. By the Author of "The
Life of the late Rev. Dr. Marsh," "Memorials of Capt. Hedley Vicars," &c.
Crown 8vo, 1s. cloth limp.
"This little volume is perhaps the most beautiful and touching of all that Miss
Marsh has written."—*Preacher's Lantern*.

RELIGIOUS POEMS. By the Author of "Stepping
Heavenward," &c. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.
"A volume of very sweet poems couched in a truly devotional spirit."—*Weekly
Review*.

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH. The Substance of

Addresses on the Book of Joshua. By STEVENSON A. BLACKWOOD. Crown 8vo, 2s. cloth limp; 2s. 6d. boards. Cheap Edition, 16mo, 1s. cloth limp.

"It is distinguished by thoughtful exposition, and a deeply religious tone pervades every page."—*Watchman*.

LONG EVENINGS AND WORK TO DO IN

THEM. By Mrs. BAYLY, Author of "Ragged Homes, and how to mend them." Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d. cloth.

"After an introduction full of incident and descriptive of work, follows a series of chapters on Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Gutenberg, which are written with great spirit, discrimination, and clearness."—*British Quarterly Review*.

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE. A Series of Les-

sons on the Acts of the Apostles. By the late Rev. WILLIAM ARNOT, Edinburgh, Author of "This Present World," &c. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

"Racy and readable, based upon solid study, and brightened with facts gathered by an unusually observant eye, and with the fancies of an active imagination."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*.

DARK SAYINGS OF OLD. Being an attempt to Elu-

cidate certain Difficult Passages of Holy Scripture, in a Series of Ten Lectures. By the Rev. J. B. McCaUL, Honorary Canon of Rochester, &c. Post 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"A valuable contribution to current theological literature, and well adapted to counteract some of those erroneous opinions on sacred subjects which are sadly too prevalent in the present day."—*Church of England Magazine*.

THE GATES OF PRAYER. A Book of Private

Devotion for Morning and Evening. By the Author of "Morning and Night Watches." 16mo, 2s. cloth.

"The prayers of which this volume is composed are of a high order, and will be found full of suggestions."—*Rock*.

BLACK IVORY. A Tale of Adventure among the Slavers

of East Africa. By R. M. BALLANTYNE, Author of "The Lifeboat," "The Norsemen in the West," &c. Illustrations. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"A captivating story, and likely to do good withal, with incident and information, the picturesque and the practical, adventure and pathetic appeals, skillfully mingled for a good purpose."—*Record*.

UNDER THE SURFACE. Poems by FRANCES RIDLEY

HAVERGAL, Author of "The Ministry of Song," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth. Cheap Edition, royal 32mo, 1s. 6d. cloth, gilt edges.

"Great freshness of feeling, fulness of thought, and ready command of measure."—*British Quarterly Review*.

THE WORD OF LIFE. Being Selections from the Work

of a Ministry. By the Rev. CHARLES J. BROWN, D.D., Edinburgh. Post 8vo, 6s. cloth.

"Good specimens of the higher class of sermons given from the Scottish pulpit."—*Edinburgh Courier*.

THE GOSPEL AND ITS FRUITS. A Book for the

Young. By the Rev. J. H. WILSON, Edinburgh, Author of "Our Father in Heaven," &c. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"The book is quite unique. Full of sound doctrinal teaching, illustrated by anecdote and hymn and picture, it commands and rivets attention."—*Daily Review*.

THE MINISTRY OF SONG. By FRANCES RIDLEY

HAVERGAL, Author of "Bruey," &c. Cheaper Edition. 32mo, 1s. 6d. cloth.

"Exquisite poems."—*Our Own Fireside*.

"Full of real poetry—rich, deep, true, sweet, and brave thoughts."—*Woman's Work*.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. J. J. WEITBRECHT,

Late Missionary of the Church Missionary Society in Bengal. Compiled by his WIDOW from his Journals and his Letters. With a Preface by the late Rev. H. VENN, M.A. Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"The book ought to have a place in every library that has a missionary department."—*Literary World*.

OUR FRIENDS IN HEAVEN ; or, The Mutual Recognition of the Redeemed in Glory Demonstrated. By the Rev. J. M.

KILLEN, D.D., Author of "Our Companions in Glory," &c. Fifteenth Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"A full, earnest, and conclusive investigation of the entire subject."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review*.

LIGHT AND LIFE IN CHRIST. By the Rev. F.

WHITFIELD, M.A., Author of "Voices from the Valley," "Earthly Shadows of the Heavenly Kingdom," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"A series of expositions fresh in thought, spiritual in tone, and warm in feeling."—*Our Own Fireside*.

CHILD LIFE. A Collection of Poems. Edited by JOHN

GREENLEAF WHITTIER. With many Illustrations. 4to, 6s. cloth, gilt edges.

"Turning over its leaves, it appears to us a charming volume, and we know of no other which strings together so many gems of the like water."—*Times*.

SOLDIERS AND SERVANTS OF CHRIST: or,

Chapters on Church History. With Preface by the Rev. F. V. MATHER, M.A., Vicar of St. Paul's, Clifton, and Canon of Bristol. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"An exceedingly valuable book. . . . The narratives embrace chief names from the 1st to the 16th century, and are so told that they will interest young people."—*Christian Observer*.

SERMONS AND LECTURES. By the late Rev. JAMES

HAMILTON, D.D., F.L.S., Author of "Life in Earnest," "The Great Biography," &c. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

"A number of sermons and lectures, in all cases, of extreme beauty and excellence."—*Rock*.

THIS PRESENT WORLD. Sketches from Nature and Art, taken in the Vacations of a Professional Life. By the late Rev. WILLIAM ARNOT, Edinburgh, Author of "The Parables of our Lord." Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"A delightful little book, and one likely, we think, to be very useful."—*Edinburgh Courant*.

SERMONS ON OLD TESTAMENT SUBJECTS. By the late Rev. EDWARD WALKER, D.C.L., Rector of Cheltenham. Edited by The Rev. T. F. BOULTBEE, LL.D. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"Full of sound Gospel truth, these sermons are marked by great earnestness and directness of appeal."—*Rock*.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED. Lectures on 1 Corinthians ii. By the Rev. ADOLPH SAPHIR, B.A. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"A valuable commentary."—*Sword and Trowel*.

"An earnest, forcible, luminous presentation of the mind of the Spirit."—*Literary World*.

VOICES FROM THE VALLEY TESTIFYING OF JESUS. By the Rev. F. WHITFIELD, M.A., Author of "Earthly Shadows of the Heavenly Kingdom." &c. Seventh Edition, Small Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"Eloquent, evangelical, and simple, we cannot express too high an opinion of these expositions of Scripture."—*Our Own Fireside*.

THE NORSEMEN IN THE WEST; or, America before Columbus. By R. M. BALLANTYNE, Author of "The Iron Horse," &c. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth, with Illustrations.

"A book that cannot possibly be laid down till the very last word of the last line has been read."—*Athenæum*.

SYNOPTICAL LECTURES ON THE BOOKS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. First Series—Genesis to Song of Songs—Second Series—Isaiah to Acts—Third Series—Completing the work. By the Rev. DONALD FRASER, D.D., Marylebone. Crown 8vo, each 6s. cloth.

"Singularity interesting, instructive and comprehensive lectures."—*Record*.

SCRIPTURE ITSELF THE ILLUSTRATOR. A Manual of Illustrations, gathered from Scriptural Figures, Phrases, Types, Derivations, Chronology, Texts, &c., adapted for the use of Preachers and Teachers. By the Rev. G. S. BOWES, B.A. Small Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"Evidently the result of attentive and persevering study . . . We strongly recommend it to the notice of preachers and teachers, feeling sure that they will derive many suggestive hints from it."—*Church of England Magazine*.

BRUEY, A LITTLE WORKER FOR CHRIST. By FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL, Author of "The Ministry of Song." Third Edition, Small Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"Written in a fascinating style."—*Woman's Work*.

"A peculiarly interesting volume."—*Churchman's Shilling Magazine*.

THE DEATH OF SELF, THE LIFE OF SERVICE. Lectures on Isaiah vi., preached in Portman Chapel, during Lent, 1872. By the Rev. J. W. REEVE, M.A. Small Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"Weighty truths expressed with much earnestness and plainness."—*Church of England Magazine*.

"Can hardly be too fervently commended to the attention of the Christian reader."—*Record*.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. The Lord's Prayer Familiarly Explained and Illustrated for Children. By the Rev. J. H. WILSON, Edinburgh. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth, with Illustrations.

"One of the most interesting and successful expositions of the Lord's Prayer in our language. It abounds in illustration and anecdote, and cannot fail to be a favourite with young people."—*Evangelical Magazine*.

HEAVENLY PLACES. Addresses on the Book of Joshua. By STEVENSON A. BLACKWOOD. Second Edition. Small Crown 8vo, 2s. cloth limp; 2s. 6d. boards. Cheap Edition, 16mo, 1s. cloth limp.

"Sound, earnest, and practical enforcement of Evangelical truth."—*Evangelical Magazine*.

AN EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT. Intended chiefly as a help to Family Devotion. Edited and continued by the Rev. W. DALTON, B.D. Fourth Edition. 2 vols. 8vo, 24s. cloth.

THE CULTURE OF PLEASURE; or, The Enjoyment of Life in its Social and Religious Aspects. By the Author of "The Mirage of Life." Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"A very readable, enjoyable, and profitable work."—*The Daily Telegraph*.

"A pleasant volume to read; full of anecdote and illustration. It has a flavour of the raciness of the Doctor of Southey and of the philosophy of the Lacon of Colton."—*The English Churchman*.

INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE LATE REV. A. R. C. DALLAS, M.A., RECTOR OF WONSTON. By HIS WIDOW. With Portrait. Third Edition. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth.

"An important and well-timed contribution to the religious biography of the nineteenth century."—*Christian Observer*.

MOSES THE MAN OF GOD. A Series of Lectures by the late JAMES HAMILTON, D.D., F.L.S. Third Edition. Small Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"Graceful description, imaginative reconstruction, unconventional, and often very ingenious, sometimes learned disquisition, with the light graceful touch of poetic style and delicate fancy."—*British Quarterly Review*.

LAYS OF THE HOLY LAND. Selected from Ancient and Modern Poets. By the Rev. HORATIUS BONAR, D.D. New Edition, with Illustrations from original Photographs and Drawings. Crown 4to, 12s. cloth.

"The Holy Land is a subject to which all great poets have devoted some of their best endeavours, and these are now brought together and adorned by illustrations worthy of such a text. . . . The volume will long remain a favourite."—*Times*.

THE FLOATING LIGHT OF THE GOODWIN SANDS. A Tale by R. M. BALLANTYNE, Author of "The Lifeboat," &c. With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"As full of incident, as healthy in tone, and as fresh and vigorous in style as any of its predecessors."—*Scotsman*.

THE LIFE OF THE LATE JAMES HAMILTON, D.D., F.L.S. By the late Rev. WILLIAM ARNOT, Edinburgh. Post 8vo, 7s. 6d. cloth. With Portrait.

"We rejoice to recommend this volume as a congenial and worthy record of one of the noblest and most fruitful lives with which the Church of Christ has been blessed in modern days. The editor's work has been done with admirable judgment."—*Weekly Review*.

A MEMOIR OF THE LATE REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS, M.A., Missionary to China. By the late Professor ISLAY BURNS, D.D., Glasgow. Crown 8vo, 6s. cloth. With Portrait. Cheap Edition. Small Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

"A more apostolic life has rarely been spent. . . . It is impossible to estimate too highly the good that may flow from this record of Christian life and labour."—*Sunday Magazine*.

THE LORD'S PRAYER. Lectures by the Rev. ADOLPH SAPHIR, B.A., Greenwich. Fifth Edition. Small Crown 8vo, 5s. cloth.

"A work so wide in its range of thought, and so concentrated in its doctrinal teachings, so rich and well packed, yet so simple and interesting, and so clear, pure, and intelligible in expression does not often make its appearance."—*Christian Work*.

BLENDING LIGHTS; or, The Relations of Natural Science, Archæology, and History to the Bible. By the Rev. WILLIAM FRASER, LL.D. Second Edition. Post 8vo, 6s. 6d. cloth.

"Before dismissing this particular subject allow me, with all earnestness and most grateful thanks to the author, to draw special attention to a truly admirable recently published volume on the Relations of Natural Science to the Bible, by the Rev. Dr. Fraser, of Paisley."—*Address by Dr. Duff as Moderator of the Free General Assembly*.

SERMONS. Preached at King's Lynn. By the late Rev. E. L. HULL, B.A. First, Second, and Third Series. Post 8vo, each 6s. cloth.

"This new volume of twenty sermons has all the claims of the first—the same happy use of Scripture, the same clear and firm grasp of the principle of every text he selected, the same earnest longing after the beauty of holiness on which he has now entered, the same play of imagination, the same freshness of thought, and fitness of utterance."—*Freeman on Second Series*.

